IMAGI-MOVIES™

Winter 1994

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BEYOND DRACULA

Florina Kendrick in vampire makeup by Oscar-winner Michele Burke

MOVIE VAMPIRISM SPECIAL ISSUE!

"INTERVIEW WITH A VAMPIRE" PREVIEW

PLUS MAKING "MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN"

Volume 2 Number 2

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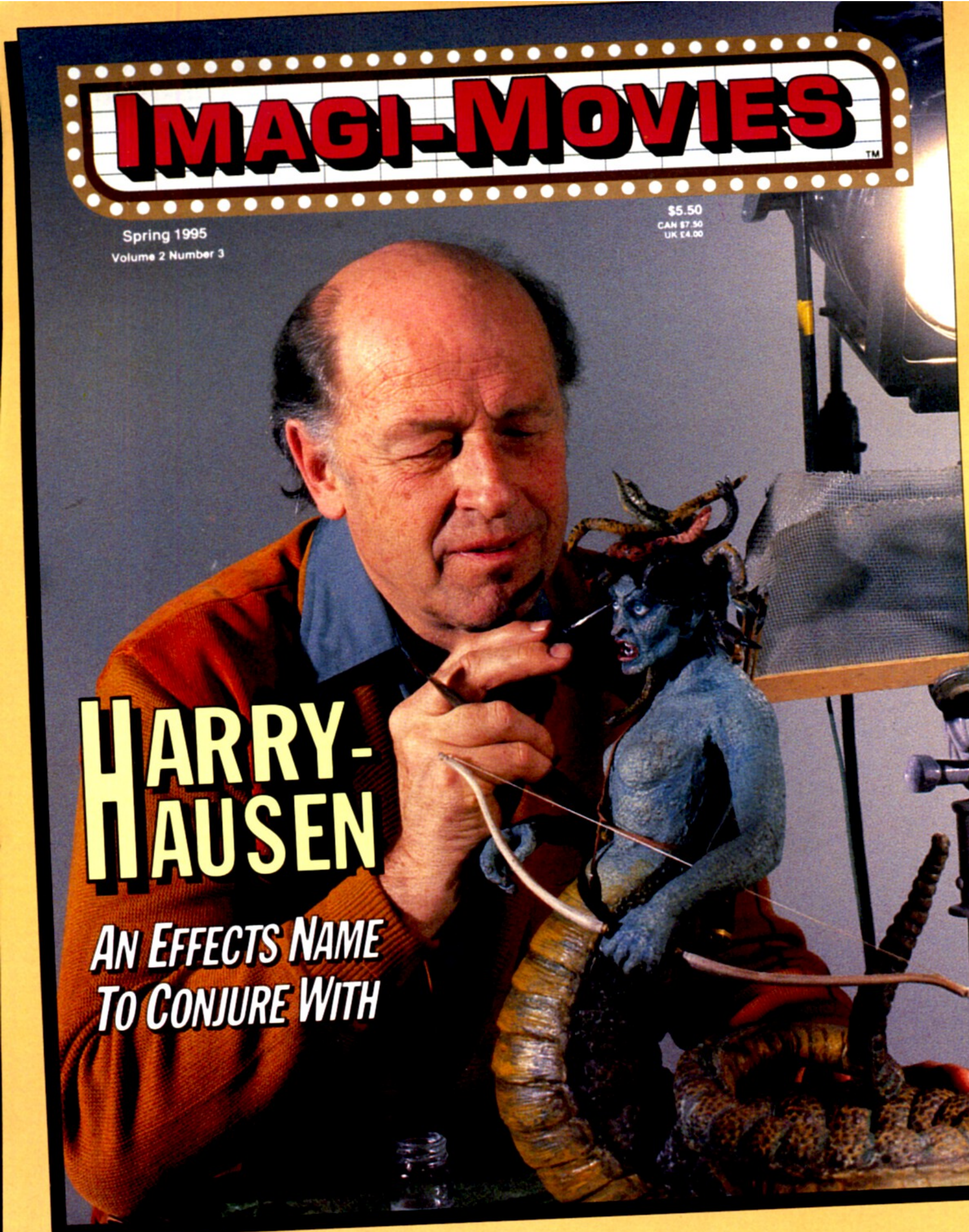

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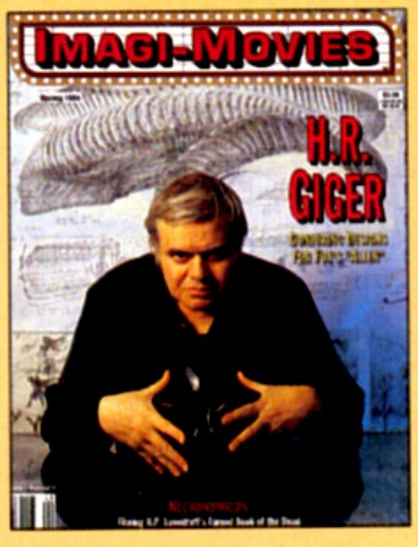

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IMAGI-MOVIES

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CINEMAGINATION

Welcome to a special issue of *Imagi-Movies*. With INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE approaching, we decided to delve into the vampire sub-genre, in an effort to gain some insight into its phenomenal continuing popularity. We're calling the coverage "Beyond Dracula," but in a way "Beyond Bram Stoker" might be more accurate. The late Irish author's seminal Count is still very much with us, but he and his vampire brethren have undergone a tremendous metamorphosis in the 20th century, extending well beyond the ground rules laid out in Stoker's novel. Anne Rice is only the most popular and visible member of this post-modern movement, which includes other such talented authors as Chelsea Quinn Yarbro and Suzy McKee Charnas.

In a way, we're also looking at what one might call "Vampire Culture." David J. Skal has identified "Monster Culture": youngsters turning to horror film and literature for the same kind of initiation rites of passage that other cultures have in traditional forms. Vampire Culture is something altogether more mature. As we grow older, the appeal of old-fashioned monsters may seem quaint, even childish, but Rice adds an unprecedented sophistication that makes her work appeal to more serious readers. Likewise, as we outgrow our teen angst, we don't necessarily settle into middle-aged complacency, at least not those of us who love this genre and try to keep our sense of wonder alive. By the very nature of our preferences, we are still considered outsiders by mainstream culture. But there is a place for us in the world. Like the Vampire bars described in Rice's books, there are nightclubs that cater to this taste and poetry groups that carry on the tradition of the Haunted Summer at Villa Deodati where both "The Vampyre" and *Frankenstein* were born. This struggle to gain serious recognition for material long held in contempt may be overdue, but as Leonard Wolf points out in this issue: "We're winning."

Steve Biodrowski

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SINISTER SENTINEL

INTERNATIONAL

It seems like only last issue we were announcing two mummy projects in development: the long anticipated Universal film (formerly under the aegis of Clive Barker but more recently with George Romero attached) and Anthony Hickox's action-adventure take on the myth, set up at Paramount. Now a third one has been announced, based on *The Mummy, or Ramses the Damned*, by Anne Rice. Carolco purchased the rights to the property, which began as a treatment for a proposed Richard Chamberlain miniseries in the 1980s. When the author disapproved of changes requested by the network, she withdrew from the project but cleverly retained novelization rights to her story. Perhaps because it began in script form, the book is the best possible material for a film adaptation in the author's canon, a light-hearted adventure without the brooding introspective nature of her other work. By the way, the title character is not a corpse in bandages but a handsome and dashing immortal.

● Disappointing News Department: Director John Dahl, probably the most underrated talent around, with three excellent neo-noir thrillers under his belt (KILL ME AGAIN, RED ROCK WEST, and THE LAST SEDUCTION), *was* attached to direct his first science-fiction effort, MELTDOWN, with Dolph Lundgren. Unfortunately, the deal fell apart when August Entertainment, which owns foreign distribution rights, announced a deal with Miramax for domestic rights. Trimark promptly sued, claiming a previous domestic deal with August. Both director and star have since moved on to other projects.

John Carpenter is prepping his remake of the well-remembered VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED: "It's a daunting task, because the first was an excellent movie."

● One person probably not disappointed by this development is John Carpenter, who penned the script, along with BLACK MOON RISING and EYES, as works-for-hire, with no control over the final product. "I wrote that screenplay [for MOON] back in '76 as a Charles Bronson car movie, and somebody sold it," he recalls. "MELTDOWN's a script I made out of *The Prometheus Crisis*, a novel about a nuclear meltdown, which they've tried to turn into an action movie with Dolph Lundgren. What can you do? Nothing."

Carpenter meanwhile is gearing up for his Universal/Alive remake of VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED. "I would have to take basically the same story and bring it into America," he says. "It's a daunting task, because the first one was an excellent movie, and I don't know that I could surpass it. We might be able to do a little bit better than the [special effects for the] eyes, which was a last minute thing."

Carpenter is also considering sequels to two of his previous films, but neither is very far into development. "We've always talked about doing ESCAPE FROM L.A.," he says. "We had a script done by somebody else, and it didn't work. I need to sit down and do it. I think a lot of what studios want is another ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK—they don't want to go to L.A., and I don't want to visit the same territory again. There's a series of comic books out, a sequel to THE THING, which I want to do very much—they're sensational. I'd do that in a flash. It starts where my film left off: two characters walking across the frozen tundra, trying to save each other."

● Speaking of Trimark, the company just picked up U.S. rights to writer-director Stephen Norrington's DEATH MACHINE, starring Brad Dourif. The American actor describes the futuresque British production to journalist Edith Sorenson as "a sci-fi thriller about a mad genius who creates a killing machine that hones in on people's fears. The whole thing is supposed to be American; it's just that the money, the studio, the special effects, and everything are all English."

● Last August, the screen's greatest Baron Frankenstein, Peter Cushing, passed away, shortly after reuniting with Christopher Lee to record narration for the documentary FLESH AND BLOOD: THE HAMMER HERITAGE OF HORROR. An actor who breathed life into every script, no matter how lacking, Cushing was one-half of the greatest combo in the history of screen horror, along with Lee. Their work at Hammer provided the defining example of how to rework old material: by treating it as something new. Just as Lee's Dracula bore little resemblance to Lugosi, Cushing's Baron and his Professor Van Helsing were truly original creations, albeit inspired by literary sources. This is most obvious in the FRANKENSTEIN series. Whereas Mary Shelley's character repented his actions almost immediately after creating his creature, Cushing's Frankenstein is a wonderfully focused and single-minded megalomaniac who will never admit defeat, no matter how many disasters he perpetrates.

Cushing was part of a triumvirate of horror stars, including Lee and Vincent Price, who became the equivalent of Lugosi, Karloff, and Chaney for a new generation of horror fans when Technicolor replaced the old-fashioned black-and-white approach. Cushing's gift was that he brought a sense of serious dignity and class to every role, which kept his films from ever seeming lurid, despite the new, more graphic style. Sadly, only Lee remains.

● SEAQUEST DSV is back for a second season. Stephanie Beacham is gone, and four new cast members are in, including Rosalind Allen as a telepathic parapsychologst. "They're totally revamping the show. It has a whole new look. They came to Florida because the outdoor locations are so gorgeous, and they're trying to make it much more open, instead of being restricted to the ship so much. The emphasis isn't so much on scientific fact as it was; there is much more fantasy, although it still has the educational element as well. They want to make sure the entertainment value is there."

● After much rumor and speculation, Chris Columbus has finally signed on to direct a big-budget version of THE FANTASTIC FOUR at 20th Century Fox. The film will be made in association with Bernd Eichenger's Constantin Film, which produced the low-budget version with Roger Corman's Concorde/New Horizon last year. No other talent has been attached, and no start date is set. With Columbus currently shooting NINE MONTHS, and with several other projects in development (including the THEATER OF BLOOD remake), it could be awhile before the FANTASTIC FOUR reaches the screens, and there seems little chance of the low-budget version being released in the meantime. □

Foiled again! Dr. Doom saw his film debut scrapped for a tonier version to be directed by Chris Columbus.

EDITION

GARGOYLES

Disney Afternoon goes Gothic on Friday.

By Dan Persons

A thousand years ago, they were the allies of humankind. Reviled during the day by those they protected, by night they filled the sky. But betrayal shattered the fragile truce that bound them to humanity, and a curse condemned them to a millennial sleep, frozen into stone images struck from the very depths of our nightmares. Now their sleep is over. Awakened by the machinations of a ruthless industrialist, they discover themselves transported from the bleak highlands of Scotland to the crystalline spires of Manhattan. Smarting from the injustice of their thousand-year imprisonment, they must now reconcile themselves to life in a world not of their making. Their benevolent natures will find new allies both within and without the law, while their preternatural abilities will aid them in doing battle against both mortal criminals and the deathless evil that shared their hibernation. They are creatures of myth, no longer confined to our fantasies. They are the last of their kind, determined to uphold their clan's dedication to truth and justice. They are strength; they are power...

They are Disney?!

Look out, Huey, Dewey, and Louie. THE DISNEY AFTERNOON, once the bastion for such kid fare as CHIP AND DALE'S RESCUE RANGERS and GOOF TROOP, gets a radical makeover when GARGOYLES debuts in October. Not merely a weekly, ratings-aimed departure from the cartoon bloc's standard light-comic tales, the thirteen-episode series will also functioning as a spearhead for the newly-dubbed "Action Friday."

Kicking off with a five-part origin tale, GARGOYLES recounts the adventures of Goliath (voiced by Keith David) and his band of winged warriors, forced to hibernate as stone statues during the day but awakened by night to take on the criminal forces of New York City. Befriended by police detective Elisa Chaves (Salli Richardson), opposed by billionaire David Xanatos and Goliath's former lover Demona (ST:TNG's Jonathan Frakes and Marina Sirtis), the quintet of supernatural soldiers must come to terms with contemporary New York, fighting crime while (if we are to believe Disney publicity) learning to cope with everything "from music video to subways to pizza."

Goliath (voiced by Keith David) leads the medieval Gargoyles who use their preternatural abilities to battle the forces of evil.

The producers, however, insist that the show will not be Teenage Mutant Ninja Gargoyles, even if its roots can be traced to a similar, comic-adventure source. "This is going to sound odd," admits Disney's director of series development, Greg Weisman, "but when we began, we were thinking of GUMMY BEARS. It was a really great series hampered by a sugar-coated name that made everyone think it was a CARE BEARS kind of thing. It was actually set in medieval times and had this real sense of mythology about it. When we set about creating GARGOYLES, part of what we were trying to do was that kind of comedy-adventure show. We were just going to take that kind of rich mythology, set it in the 20th century to update it, and ditch the cutesy name and the cuddly bear image. As the characters developed, the property itself demanded a more dramatic treatment and a more realistic style."

NEXT GENERATION's Jonathan Frakes and Marina Sirtis voice series villains Xanatos and Demona.

Brought in to guide the show towards this vision are a mix of animation pros who (not coincidentally) have spent more than a little time in the company of a certain Dark Knight. Frank Paur, who directed some of BATMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES' most popular episodes, will serve as producer, while novelist Michael Reaves will repeat his duties as story editor and writer. Other scripters brought over from the Warner series include Brynne Stephens and Steve Perry. Of the opportunities presented by such series as BATMAN and GARGOYLES, Reaves notes, "Animation, in this country, is an extremely underused medium. There have been some great cartoons in terms of comedy, but as far as action-adventure, fantasy, and science fiction, it's difficult to get anything done that truly breaks new ground. Most of them are just the same old toy-based series, and it's kind of depressing. I think on BATMAN we proved that animation is the best film medium for doing a show about a super-hero."

Even as all admit that BATMAN provided impetus for the new series, they also emphasize that GARGOYLES will be no mere knock-off. Says Paur, "Everybody's first impression of GARGOYLES was, 'It's a copy of BATMAN.' But, aside from the fact that once in a while a gargoyle flutters across the moon, there will be very little resemblance. I think when GARGOYLES is released, it's going to surprise more than a few people with its intensity." □

DEAD AT 21

MTV's first science-fiction effort owes a debt to what came before.

By Anthony P. Montesano

Jack Noseworthy plays Ed, and Lisa Dean Ryan plays Maria in DEAD AT 21, MTV's attempt to create a cyberpunk science-fiction melodrama, a la Phillip K. Dick.

For the past 20 years you've been a government guinea pig who will die on your 21st birthday—unless you can piece together a puzzle that will not only reveal your past but, more importantly, preserve your future. MTV has adapted its slam-bang music video style to its newest series DEAD AT 21, the music network's first foray into *cinefantastique*. DEAD AT 21 is the cautionary tale of a covert government experiment designed to enhance human intelligence by implanting a microchip in the brains of infants. The chip, however, induces hallucinogenic dreams and kills the unknowing participants by age 21.

The series wastes no time with exposition as it dives immediately into the story of Ed, who awakens on his 20th birthday from a hellish nightmare and—in the course of a mere 22 minutes of air time—has a birthday party, hallucinates some more, meets a beautiful girl in his bedroom, is attacked by a rogue government agent, is framed for murder, runs away from home with the beautiful girl ("What else have I got to do?" she reasons), discovers through—what else?—a video that he's one of many government guinea pigs who has a chip in his brain. Take a breath. If you blink, you miss half of the plot. Welcome to science fiction à la MTV.

The plot of the series owes more than a little to many genre films and tv series that have come before. Think of DEAD AT 21 as ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK meets THE FUGITIVE, with a dash of TWIN PEAKS thrown in. Like ESCAPE—in which Snake Plisken must complete his mission and return in time for a doctor to deactivate a tiny explosive in his carotid artery—DEAD AT 21 uses a race against the clock as its basic framing devise: Ed (Jack Noseworthy) will die unless he can find the scientist who implanted the ticking time bomb in his head and have it removed. As in THE FUGITIVE, Ed is framed for a murder and is relentlessly pursued by a government agent who wants him dead. At the very core of DEAD AT 21 is a distrust of all adults; in fact, adults are equated with evil, while Generation X struggles with survival on its own. Paranoia and distrust are central themes. The series actually exists on two levels. The first is the familiar landscape of "the great American road": night clubs, shopping malls, coffee houses. The second level exists only in Ed's mind, as the chip begins to short-circuit his brain and cause visions, which hold the key to normalcy. Ed must look inside himself to save himself. The world around him cannot be trusted. If he is to survive, his right of passage into adulthood must be accomplished in spite of every adult.

Ed must, in fact, create a new order, a new generation, with people his own age he can trust. It's evident in the immediate trust that develops between Ed and his running mate Maria (Lisa Dean Ryan). She doesn't even know him before committing herself to joining his journey to find "The Wizard." "Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain," Ed advises at one point in the series: like the fragile man who poses as "the great and powerful Oz," nothing is what it seems to be. And no one—except someone your own age—can be trusted.

Hellish nightmares abound in DEAD AT 21; and, as in the David Lynch series TWIN PEAKS, these nightmares offer clues to finding the scientist responsible for creating the race of chip-controlled CYBS. The job of creating these dreams fell to MTV producer-director Robert Jason, best known for the style he has brought to numerous openings and promos for the network, including MTV'S TOP 20 COUNTDOWN and the MTV MOVIE SPECIAL. Jason went to National Video Center in New York, MTV's home base for daily production and on-air graphics, to construct Ed's recurring nightmarish visions. Working there with Emmy Award-winning editor Chris Hengeveld and sound designer Doug "Double Dee" Di Franco, a pioneer of the master mix, Jason created what he describes as "the most horrific, terrorizing, hyper-barrage of

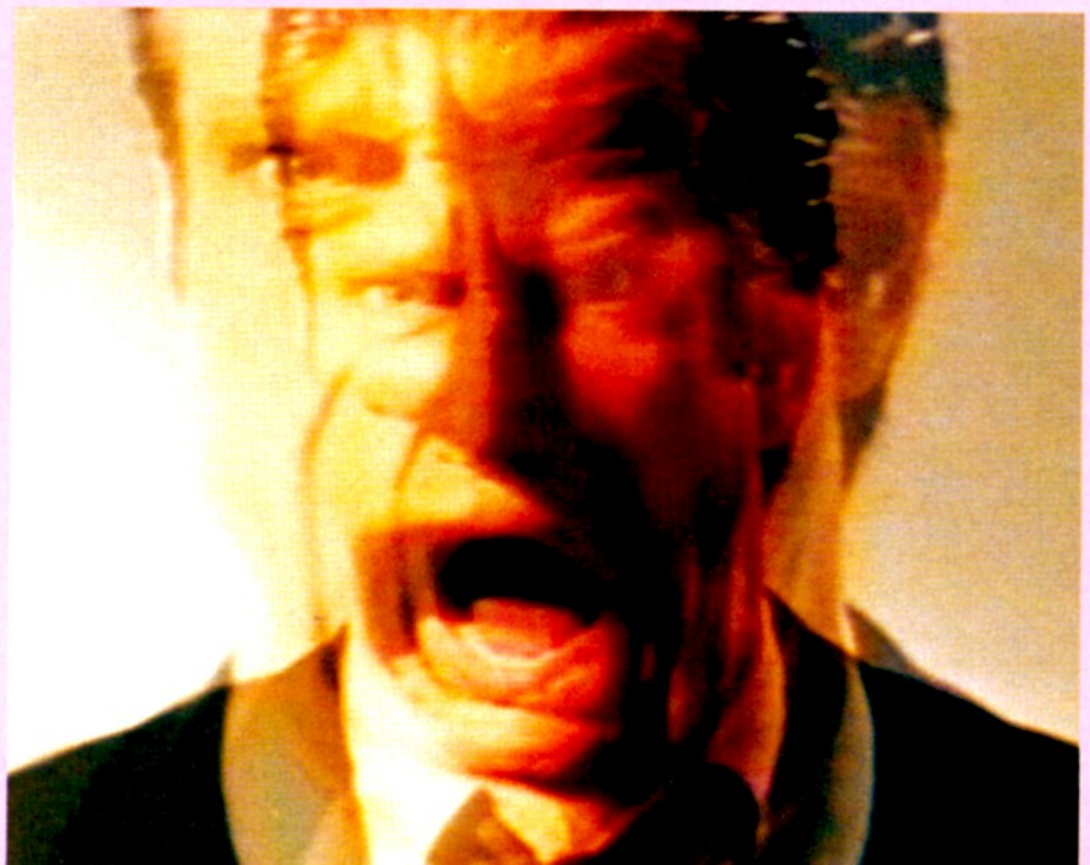
One of the surreal images from DEAD AT 21's "horrific, terrorizing, hyper-barrage" dream sequences, caused by the computer chip in Ed's brain.

images imaginable."

In the post production process, extensive use of a title camera and additional effects—such as making B & W prints of each video frame, drawing on them and reshooting them for stop-motion animation—blended with computer animation to create the right cybernetic "electric warp" look. To create a freakish foundation of images for the dream sequences, Jason mixed 35mm film with Hi-8 video formats, then shot images off of monitors ("for a pixelated feel") and through pieces of glass and mylar (to "bend the grid" of the tv image, adding a fluid feel) before further manipulating them both digitally and manually in post production. "Because of the open-ended nature of the dreams, I went to town and indulged myself with the procedures I've always wanted to use," says Jason. The dreams are pieced together by Hengeveld's hyper-speed (almost subliminally fast) editing. No procedure, it seems, is beyond consideration, including creating words on an Etch A Sketch. Other procedures include running images backwards, multi-layering the same image over itself, and stop motion of paper cut-outs as well as high-end techniques.

The audio design Di Franco created is, in Jason's assessment, "an ominous and artificial landscape." Di Franco had the freedom to design from his imagination, basing the style on the visuals and script: he took sounds and fed them back on themselves to create eerie audio hybrids such as hollow metallic rings that add a sense of claustrophobia. "Since I'm the one setting the precedent for this future world, the sky's the limit," says Di Franco, who claims to thrive on projects that allow him to create designs from his gut and intuition.

"Because of the open-ended nature of the dreams, I went to town and indulged myself with the procedures I've always wanted to use," says Jason.



For Jason—who does not direct the narrative portions of DEAD AT 21—the dream sequences represent all of the hellish images of childhood rolled into one huge Cyber-kinetic ball. "The initial dreams tried to show, in a very childlike, frightening way, the nuclear family gone wrong," he assesses. In fact, he wanted to take the main point of the series—that nothing is what it seems—literally and created a "puppet family" pasted together from various sources. "The main character is like a mannequin," explains Jason. "Everyone's pulling his strings. I wanted to represent that, but with a childlike, coloring-book sensibility." Later dreams play a torture sequence against a cyberspace environment and warp the images of beautiful scantily-clad women via stop-motion animation.

What all of this amounts to is a truly horrific science fiction vision—if somewhat derivative and over-reliant on the style of an MTV video. □

Mary Shelley Frankenste

Kenneth Branagh revives the horror classic

By Alan Jones

Underneath Animated Extras prosthetic makeup, Robert De Niro stars as Victor Frankenstein's "verbal, sensitive, dynamic, sympathetic" creation, according to Leonard Wolf. "Nobody refers to him as 'the Monster' in this film; he's 'the Creature.'"

When FRANKENSTEIN as a sequel of sorts to Francis Ford Coppola's BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA was first suggested, many had misgivings. Why make yet another FRANKENSTEIN? Primarily, the objection was that FRANKENSTEIN doesn't have the same palpable sexiness which Coppola exploited to tailor the Undead myth for mass audience acceptance. Or does it?

As Leonard Wolf notes in *The Essential Frankenstein* (a revision of *The Annotated Frankenstein*, reissued to coincide with the new film), "*Frankenstein* does not touch us because Victor Frankenstein is a scientist but because his creature was born ugly, because Victor abandoned him, because the creature's life is spent in a long, long pilgrimage toward his father/mother's love. The issue is not the scientist's laboratory; rather it is the 'workshop of filthy creation' in which love and birth, and their consequence—death—take place."

With this in mind (and with Wolf serving as consultant) director and star Kenneth Branagh has created a new version of the oft-filmed tale for a November 4th release by TriStar Pictures. Produced by Francis Ford Coppola and James V. Hart (late of BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA) and John Veitch, the film was written by Steph Lady and Frank Darabont. Also starring are Helena Bonham Carter, Tom Hulce, Aidan Quinn, John Cleese, Ian Holm, and Cherie Lunghi.

Branagh admits he had his initial doubts about the romantic/erotic content, "but now I can see how weirdly sexy FRANKENSTEIN is. The whole premise is laced with sexual energy. The way the Creature is zapped into life during the Creation scene is a case in point. As Victor, I'm stripped to the waist in the steaming inferno of the laboratory. There's the sexual imagery of the sarcophagus incorporating womb and balls. The Creature is floating in amniotic fluid [the 'water' that breaks in pregnant women] I'd bought from midwives. I'm writhing on top of the sarcophagus, figuratively fucking the Creature into life. The Creature lies on the lab floor like an afterbirth in the delivery room. It's so explicit I hope it isn't laughable. Then there's the homo-erotic tussle between Victor and the Creature over Elizabeth and the promise of consummation on their wedding night. That's a teas in the book, whereas we go for every evocative *frisson* we could get away with."

John Veitch adds, "The erotic aspects are sensual to a degree and done in excellent taste. The sexuality is part of the story; and, though we did

's in for the '90s.

not go overboard, we took advantage of it. The same is true of the horror. The most shocking scene in FRANKENSTEIN is when the Creature plucks the heart out of one of the main characters [Elizabeth]. It's not done for gore's sake but to frighten the audience and let them know just how much power the Creature has. It's that intelligent approach to the horror which makes our FRANKENSTEIN original."

While Shelley's book put the gore in allegory, what Branagh was insistent on and what he firmly impressed when Darabont was brought on to rewrite Steph Lady's draft was how desperate he was to get away from all the comparisons to either the James Whale classic or Mel Brooks' YOUNG FRANKENSTEIN (1974). Branagh remarks, "Melodrama, camp and comedy—those were the three elements to avoid at all costs in my mind. It was important we used the events from Shelley's novel, too. No other feature film has done that. I wanted to take a lot of time to establish the Frankenstein family and their relationships, rather than rush straight into Victor's laboratory—i.e., be full-bloodedly Gothic in a more colorful way than just gory."

Nevertheless, Branagh is quick to add that FRANKENSTEIN will still be a visceral experience with loads of scares for the core horror audience. "It's a thinking man's horror picture, because it deals with the terror in tragedy," the director-star declares. "The book is Greek tragedy almost

The Created confronts his Creator (Kenneth Branagh as Frankenstein), over a corpse selected for the potential Bride.

Frankenstein

MONSTER MAKEUP

Animated Extras turned De Niro into a "creature."

By Alan Jones

Only De Niro's eyes and one ear are not covered by makeup, yet the actor had to be recognizeable, so the facial prosthetics were designed to copy his features.

"Frankenstein's Monster" may be the term lodged in the public consciousness, but Daniel Parker of Animated Extras Company (in keeping with the script, which uses the term "creature") wanted his prosthetics to turn Robert De Niro not into a monster but into a patchwork man.

"One of the main prosthetic sections is a big arm," explains Parker. "If Victor was raiding graveyards for body parts they wouldn't all be a uniform size, would they? Well, in the arm, there's actually a whole separate muscle system stuck to De Niro's own limb, with different foam densities, which made each muscle move in different ways. Then the prosthetic skin is put over that so the skin moves independently to the muscles as well."

All the prosthetics worked in tandem with De Niro's body. "There was one section that took in the whole of one side. Another took in the other half of his torso with the big arm separate. The arm was longer and bigger with an independent muscle system, and the attached hand had an independent bone system, extending De Niro's own fingers, so everything was in proportion. And then there were the facial prosthetics. As far as the head and hands went, there were generally eight pieces in all. There was a bigger, longer leg too, which didn't need an independent muscle system. It wasn't necessary. One of the leg sections had a bigger foot on it, causing the Creature to limp. That took a long time to work out, although it sounds quite simple. De Niro's chiropodist had put special insoles into his own shoes, and we had to install an instep into the big foot so it would go along with this prescription. The lift was over an inch in all. There were three main stages to the makeup, too. It starts out as fresh wounds all sewn up, but by the end the Creature has got Keloid scarring because his body has gone through the healing process. Then there were the interim stages, which numbered about six in all, what with stitches falling out and everything else. A nightmare, continuity-wise!"

The Creature's coloring changes throughout, too, as he heals, and in the beginning his being stark naked meant even extra detailing was needed. Parker laughs, "Yes, everything is in the correct place! Much will be in shadow, probably; that's the way Animated Extras works. We used one contact lens because one eye was meant to be replaced and false teeth with a clip held up part of De Niro's lip. The clip was designed so it would not interfere with his speech—difficult to do because the pressure of the lip was pushing down all the time. They had to fit really well to stop them dropping out all the time."

The only areas of De Niro's flesh not covered by prosthetics or makeup are his eyes and one ear. Yet the actor had to be recognizable, as Parker elaborated. "If you get a big movie star for the role, the audience wants to know it's the big movie star. Why lose all that production value? The face prosthetics deliberately copied De Niro's own features for that reason and were made very thin. De Niro's a perfectionist. If he has to point out something that needs to be improved, he will. I didn't mind that at all, as I'm a perfectionist, too. When you're working on something so closely, you can't always see everything in perspective. It was good to discuss it and throw ideas around, although there were no really massive changes."

Such precision work over De Niro's entire body often meant the actor would have to spend up to six hours in the makeup chair. Parker adds, "Sometimes we started at two a.m. to get him ready for the next day's shoot. It was bloody hard work. But De Niro often insisted on doing two days work in one day. He turned his 42-day shooting schedule into 21 that way. The man didn't need any sleep. He just went on and on." □

Daniel Parker poses with the various stages of De Niro's creature makeup.

because there are a lot of bodies on the stage by the end! Victor Frankenstein is essentially a good man who strikes a bargain with the Devil like Faustus. And like MacBeth, he can't help but succumb to the fatal flaw in his nature. Once he builds the creature, he cannot turn back, and that's when the true horror begins. Try as he might, he cannot right the unrightable and must face the appalling consequences of his determined actions. A good horror tale is composed of both the tragic and the emotional, so you are repulsed and compelled at the same time. Shelley tapped into something very primal in *Frankenstein*; her genius lies in the fact that, while it's a great yarn, it contains profound insights into man's inhumanity to man, and life and death."

He continues in the same vein, "I firmly believe the ideas in FRANKENSTEIN sit differently today. When Mary Shelley wrote the book, it was a terrifying account of what was perceived as being around the corner for Mankind. Now I feel we are more receptive to the actual horror of the subject. We can replace human organs with transplants, and we are at the point where parents can choose the sex of their child. That's the difference. The atmosphere in her novel was a series of ideas which took on board who Mary was herself and anatomized her place in time; her father was a rationalist philosopher, her feminist mother died while giving birth to her: Shelley's first wife committed suicide; Mary eloped with him and they had five children."

More importantly, and significant in Branagh's mind, the world was on the brink of an industrial revolution. "Everything was about to change with a capital C from math to medicine. It was the last time any one single man could know everything. The Shelleys were at the forefront of that huge transition. Now, once more we are on the verge of another industrial revolution, the communications superhighway. Cinema could soon be replaced or enhanced by virtual reality and many other technological marvels. To my mind, it was exactly the right time to tackle FRANKENSTEIN again and allow the common strands of Shelley's past and our present to join together."

MAD DOCTOR/DIRECTOR

"I decided to star as well as direct because it seemed appropriate. Victor created a monster, and what else is directing a huge-budget film unless it's creating a monster?"

Director-star Kenneth Branagh sees the character of Victor Frankenstein as "essentially a good man who strikes a bargain with the Devil, like Faustus."

Taking all these lofty themes and aspirations on board, Darabont flew back to Los Angeles and wrote a new FRANKENSTEIN draft in six weeks. He laughs, "It was one of those, 'I must lock myself in the house until I've finished' assignments! What was unusual, and something I took as a good omen, was I had the perfect backdrop of rain through the entire period. It was unusual weather for L.A., yet appropriate to engender an obsessive mood. The moment I finished the script, the sun came out. Weird...It took a further three days to polish the script, and then they literally started pre-production. Ken apparently did a little more script finessing himself, but that was that."

Of the rewriting process, Leonard Wolf notes, "I read the drafts of the script as it was being written, and it was a very exciting process to see how it moved when Branagh was brought in. It moved in the direction of Mary Shelley, after starting pretty far afield. We finally get a verbal, sensitive, morally upright, dynamic, sympathetic Creature. I think it's a really stunning addition to the FRANKENSTEIN filmography."

While remaining faithful to the novel in virtually every other respect, there is one major departure from the Shelley text, as Branagh explains: "It was where Victor recreates his own dead bride. It's not in the book, but I can justify it by saying it's in Shelley's spirit." Darabont agrees, "If you read between the novel's lines, and if Shelley was a contemporary writer today, what we did, she would have definitely done herself. It's all there in the brilliant way she structured the piece. But in her era, it wasn't necessary to provide that sort of climactic pay-off. Now it is. It's authentic and right." (*See sidebar, page 14.*)

VICTOR/FRANKENSTEIN
What's in a name?

By Steve Biodrowski

To his creator in the original novel, he was variously a "wretch," "daemon," "vile insect," or "abhorred devil." By the characters in the Universal films he was called "the Monster" (at least until HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN, when his epithet was expanded to "the Frankenstein Monster"). As far as audiences were concerned, however, the character immortalized on-screen by Boris Karloff was called "Frankenstein," a name which, strictly speaking, more properly belonged to the doctor who gave him life. Despite pedantic attempts to correct this misconception, the idea remains firmly embedded in the popular consciousness, leading some to wonder whether or not it does, in fact, have some kind of validity.

"I've come to the conclusion that it is not incorrect to call both the Creature and the Creator 'Frankenstein,' because there really is anelement of the doppleganger to the monster," says David Skal, author of *The Monster Show*. "He is an aspect of Victor Frankenstein. One of the early 20th-century dramatist of *Frankenstein* was Peggy Webling. In her stage version, which was purchased by Universal pictures to be the basis of the Boris Karloff film, the monster was called Frankenstein and the Creator was called Henry, so together they were Henry Frankenstein. She played this doppleganger motif with many things that did not find their way into the film; for example, they wore the same costume. So it's not simply a mistake of later filmgoers. I think they're intuiting something very important."

Leonard Wolf adds, "I've tracked the way that Victor

continued on next page

starts to look like the Creature at the end of the book and the Creature starts to talk like Victor at the beginning of the book. You're entirely right. If you drew a map of the plot, Victor goes from West to East and the Creature goes from East to West, and in the middle they become each other."

Patronymic aside, the other debate revolves around whether or not the created man should in fact be called a monster. In CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN, Hammer Films dubbed Christopher Lee "the Creature," probably just to be different from Universal. Frank Darabont's script for MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN continues this tradition, more for reasons of emphasizing the sympathetic portrayal of the character. "Nobody refers to him as 'the Monster' in this film," Wolf points out. "He's 'the Creature.'"

Of course, Karloff himself wasn't so much monstrous as misunderstood, the name more or less a leftover from early treatments. "Bela Lugosi was supposed to play the Frankenstein Monster," says Skal. "The story's told is that it was a bad decision on his part, that he never should have turned the role down, that he did it for reasons of vanity—because he didn't want his features hidden under all that makeup. He supposedly said, 'I'm an actor, not a scarecrow.' But when you go back and look at the script that Lugosi would have acted, it would have been a terrible part for an actor, because none of the sympathy and pathos of Karloff's performance were in that script. It was really only with James Whale and with Karloff himself that that vision of the monster evolved. Lugosi would have played the Creature as this mindless killing machine, and apparently his makeup was patterned after THE GOLEM." □

TAPPING THE SOURCE

"Shelley tapped into something very primal in *Frankenstein*," says Branagh. "Her genius lies in the fact that, while a great yarn, it contains profound insights into life and death."

Former Monty Python member John Cleese plays Professor Waldman, whose sympathetic advice encourages Victor in his quest to create life.

With the script honed to Branagh's exact specifications, the FRANKENSTEIN machinery started limbering up for an August 1993 start date at Shepperton Studios outside London. Producer John Veitch says, "One of the FRANKENSTEIN challenges for me was starting a picture from scratch in the United Kingdom. It was important for Ken to make a movie in Britain. The British Film Industry wasn't as active as it should've been, and he felt duty bound to help it in whatever way he could."

Branagh continues, "Where else could it be made? FRANKENSTEIN is a classic European story and exactly the type of picture the talent here could exploit. It's the home of Hammer Films, the company most associated with FRANKENSTEIN, too. London is where I live and where I prefer to base my filmmaking operation. It also meant I could use actors with whom I have an ongoing relationship. Plus, I could spring some cast surprises and get comedian John Cleese to play Professor Waldman with an unusual edge of mad melancholia. Think De Niro in THE KING OF COMEDY—that sinister craziness. Although Tom Hulce, Aidan Quinn and De Niro are American, FRANKENSTEIN turned out a 99% British production."

"My main concern was the English weather," recalls Veitch, who was angling for principal shooting to begin in August. "We filmed DRACULA on the Columbia soundstages in L.A. and had a week on the Universal backlot for the London street scenes. No problem. For FRANKENSTEIN, production designer Tim Harvey built an entire period-style village on the Shepperton backlot. So I wanted to start in August and be finished by Christmas to take advantage of the best time weather-wise."

Unfortunately, Robert De Niro was finishing up a directing assignment, which backed the start date to October. "At that time of year the light is gone by four p.m., so I made certain we could shift inside to the stages to continue filming," says Veitch. "Although I felt it was dangerous to start a picture of this size and scope in October. I have to say we didn't lose one day because of outside elements."

Three weeks prior to the October start of principal photography, FRANKENSTEIN shot for ten days in the Swiss Alps on various mountains and glaciers. Veitch recounts that the production had to have its equipment hauled up by helicopter in a cargo net. "We had six helicopters in all, plus a small crew of two persons per craft," he says. "When it started to get foggy, we had to stop filming and leave or else the helicopters couldn't take off and we'd have been stuck there. Once or twice, the fog struck suddenly, and there really was no other way out, apart from down tortuous mountain roads. Instead of moaning and freezing, the crew roughed it with humor beyond the call of duty, and were absolutely brilliant. It literally was the perfect ice-breaking situation. I know it's a cliche to say the cast and crew were wonderful, but this team were the best it's ever been my privilege to work with."

Despite being won over by Branagh's personality and his whole concept of FRANKENSTEIN, there was one aspect to the project Veitch did worry about initially. He remarks, "Ken was a multi-faceted talent, no question about that. He'd also directed, produced and starred in his own movies. I've worked with personalities like Jerry Lewis who've also worn those three hats on one picture. But I was concerned that Ken had bitten off more than he could chew with FRANKENSTEIN. He'd never helmed a film this big before and I'd be lying if I said it didn't bother me. But after the first couple of days, when I saw how well he was coping, all my tentative fears vanished."

"Of course I was scared shitless," grins Branagh. "But I decided to star as well as direct because primarily I am an actor, and it seemed the appropriate thing to do. Victor created a 'monster' and what else is directing a huge-budget picture like FRANKENSTEIN unless it's creating a film monster also? I connected with

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Frankenstein

SET EFFECTS

Richard Conway helped Kenneth Branagh bring his creation to life.

By Alan Jones

"FRANKENSTEIN was clearly going to be a heavy floor effects film," says special effects supervisor Richard Conway. "The first script contained loads of opticals, but that was whittled down quite a bit afterwards. As a result, I employed between 15 and 30 people for the department at varying times."

Although Branagh let his team get on with the job in hand, Conway had to make sure the constantly creative director didn't spring too many surprises along the way. "On such a big undertaking as FRANKENSTEIN I knew it was imperative to be exactly clear on what he wanted. Ken had some quite radical ideas which only came under discussion when I confronted him. An example was when we had to burn down the hovel housing the blind man's family. I was thinking of the inferno in a literal sense, while Ken saw it as a key metaphorical happening. Visually, we had to plan how this fire progresses into one enormous conflagration. Ken wanted the dramatic effect of this huge flame reaching up into the sky, which he felt highlighted the Creature's pent-up anger over being rejected by the family. Translating that kind of concept into special effects terms gave me a big boost creatively because I felt I was really sharing his artistry."

The one most difficult shot Conway had to contend with was the demise of the Bride of Frankenstein. He noted, "Her burning stunt was very hairy for us. She breaks an oil lamp over her head, runs down the Frankenstein mansion's corridors, jumps over the balcony and explodes in a pillar of flame. We were working with the stunt woman, and it had to be as impressive as possible within the confines of the soundstage. But it was so hard from a safety point of view. We pushed as close to the limits as we could by restricting the shooting to the precise second before it got really dangerous. The main problem was the stunt woman had to hurtle down the corridor in flames and set fire to the walls. So as she ran along, we set off charges in the walls which we'd specifically developed from a petroleum mixture. Deflector plates pushed the flames around her body so it looked like she was indeed setting fire to the walls rather than them starting there. It was hellishly difficult to execute."

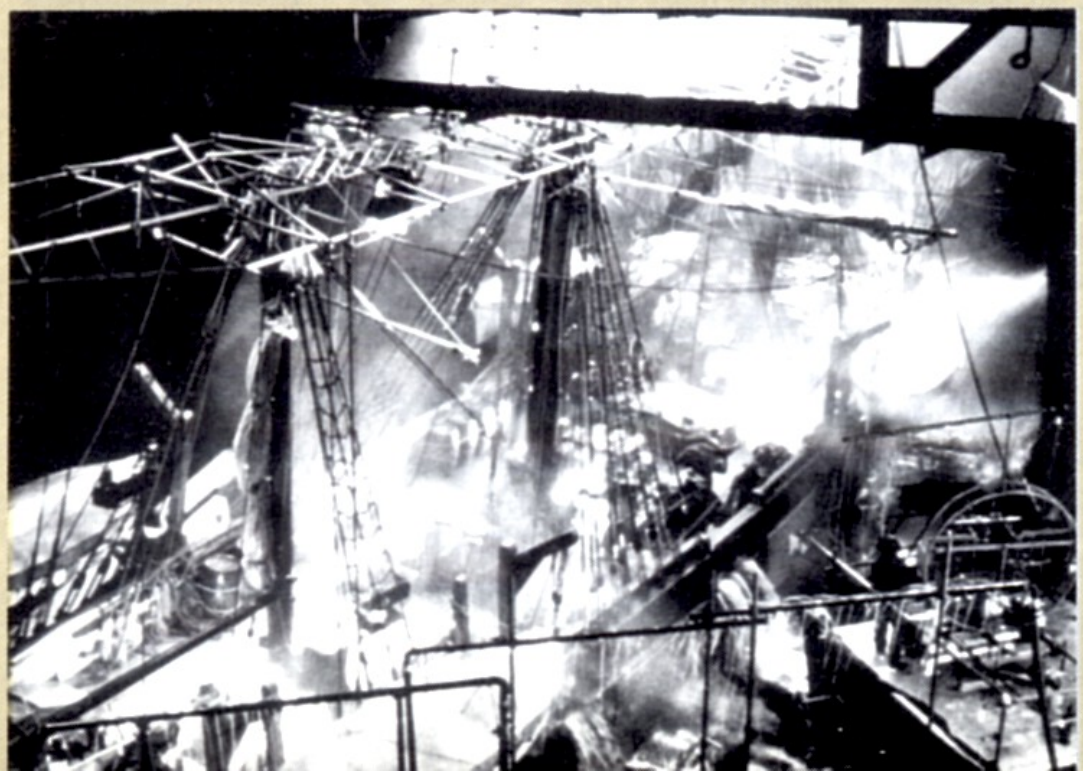
FRANKENSTEIN opens with a storm in the Arctic Sea and the three-masted ship *Alexander Nevsky* crashing onto an ice floe. However, no water was used apart from tip tanks on the soundstage. "Because it was a night-time sequence, we deemed it unnecessary to have water around the ship, and we shot into black to give the impression the sea is there. The first time-consuming challenge was the whole boat needed rocking, and it had a 95-foot-long deck! I talked them out of having it rock two ways because the deck being that long meant we'd have to have had it suspended 20 feet in the air to make it look like anything was happening at all. We agreed on having just lateral rocking with props rolling on deck. But at 50 tons in weight, and in order to reach a rocking angle of 22° each way, this meant a herculean effort. And at 22°, all the tip tanks had to go up correspondingly in height to get the effect of huge waves crashing on deck. Each tank was eventually place 40 feet above the floor. To complete, we took to the West coast of Wales where the Met Office assured us gale-force 8 winds and ten-foot waves would be available during December 1993. All the long shots you see in the opening storm use our impressive model boat."

The burning of the blind man's hovel: Conway saw it as a literal inferno, while Branagh envisioned a metaphor for the Creature's pent-up anger.

Of course, one of the major sequences was the elaborate Creation [*See sidebar*], for which Conway provided mechanical eels constructed of silicone rubber and animated with rods and wires. The eels traveled through a tube connecting two tanks. "Sounds simple and easy," says Conway. "Yet it was a complex operation. We had sixteen eels in all. Four six-inch pumps delivered a powerful gush through the fourteen-inch tube. It had to be that strong so when we sent air bubbles down to add texture, they wouldn't rise to the top but would flow horizontally to complete the realistic illusion."

The wires controlling the eels were then digitally removed by the Computer Film Company. "It's far easier to do things now," Conway avows. "Computer graphics have given us more confidence to embark on the scary stuff, safe in the knowledge that our mistakes can be rectified." □

Because the boat scenes take place at night, filming on water was deemed unnecessary, except for tip tanks to simulate waves crashing on the deck.



Frankenstein

ROGER CORMAN UNBOUND

The underrated effort prefigures its costly successor.

By Steve Biodrowski

When an author's creation enters the realm of popular imagination, often it becomes subject to interpretations far from the original intent. Such a case is the novel *Frankenstein*: a woman's parable elaborating the callous attitude with which men regard begetting life (i.e., having children), Mary Shelley's tale has come to be regarded as the archetypal science-fiction story decrying attempts to tamper with God's work—this despite the fact that Shelley was herself an atheist who mentions God in her novel only in reference to Milton's PARADISE LOST.

Of course, that the moral was unintended does not make it invalid, but it may explain the long gestation period of ROGER CORMAN'S FRANKENSTEIN UNBOUND (1991). Perhaps the director of MAN WITH THE X-RAY EYES and MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH was searching for a metaphor which did not exist in the original book.

Above: Hurt's Buchanan meets Julia's Frankenstein, "a man of great intellect and of greater emotional intensity and passion," per Corman. Right: Hurt and Fonda, as Shelley.

"I felt then, and still do, that there have been so many FRANKENSTEINs that your picture gets lost in the shuffle," explains Corman of his intitial reluctance. "If it's the 85th version, who cares?—unless you can find some way to do it either differently or better or, preferably, *both* differently and better."

Corman found the approach he wanted in the novel *Frankenstein Unbound*, which takes the popular notion of *Frankenstein* and uses it as an allegory for the work of modern science. Author Brian W. Aldiss tells the story of Joseph Bodenland, a retired 21st-century diplomat catapulted to the year 1816 when an interplanetary nuclear war creates a "time-slip," a rip in the very fabric of reality. Meeting both Victor Frankenstein (Raul Julia in the movie) and Mary Shelley herself (Bridget Fonda), Bodenland comes to believe his own time is the inheritor of Frankenstein's legacy—the havoc which results when science unmindfully tampers with nature—and he sets out to destroy that legacy by destroying Frankenstein and his creation.

So audiences received not a faithful adaptation of Shelley but a contemporary reinterpretation in which Corman and co-screenwriter F. X. Feeny (with an assist from ROBOCOP scribe Ed Neumeier) transformed Bodenland into Dr. Buchanan (John Hurt), a scientist whose own particle-beam weaponry experiments have created the timeslip which brings him face to face with his 19th-century equivalent.

"My answer was to do it differently," Corman recalls of his take on the Frankenstein mythos. "I think Francis Coppola and Kenneth Branagh have gone a different route, which is to go back to the original but just do it on a huge budget, so they're able to do it much bigger and, obviously, much better."

Ironically, although FRANKENSTEIN UNBOUND and MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN theoretically took different approaches (one trying to be a new interpretation, the other trying to be a faithful recreation of the original), they ended up intersecting in at least one important plot point. In Aldiss's book, Victor creates the monster's mate from the body of Justine Moritz, the servant girl executed for a murder actually committed by the monster.

"I changed that," says Corman. "Frankenstein makes the female monster from the dead body of his fiance, which then enabled me to set something up so that when she comes to life Frankenstein suddenly says, 'Wait a minute! That's the woman I love. The monster cannot have the woman I love!'"

The resulting triangle is short-lived. Victor tries to lure the revived Elizabeth, his fiance, away from the monster, but she commits suicide, stepping in front of a pistol Frankenstein has aimed at the monster.

This plot development is practically recreated in the new version. Strangely, Branagh's FRANKENSTEIN begins by using Moritz's body for the monster's mate, *a la* Aldiss; then he substitutes his fiance's head after the monster kills her. Again, creator and created vie for the affection of the newly revived Elizabeth, who again

Elizabeth (Catherine Rabett), the ill-fated fiance of Victor Frankenstein, prefigures Helana Bonham Carter.

Illusion Arts provided matte paintings for the arctic conclusion, a rethinking of Brian Aldiss's ending, which echoes Shelley's concluding chapters.

chooses to destroy herself rather than live in this new form.

Even Elizabeth's death (having her heart ripped out) echoes UNBOUND. Makeup artist Nick Dudman (BATMAN) signed on to Corman's film for a chance to create his own Frankenstein monster, but he was a bit taken aback by other gory requirements, such as showing the monster ripping open Elizabeth's chest. "This isn't a splatter movie, but it gets close a couple of times," recalls Dudman. "We rigged it in such a way that you couldn't linger on it. For one thing, we had no time to build anything too sophisticated; in fact, that was quite a good safety net for us, because it meant they couldn't ask for too much gratuitous gore."

Dudman also provided a makeup for when Frankenstein revives his fiance's body. "We had a design point for the monster whereby, instead of bolts in the neck, we had heavily sculpted copper and silver contacts on either side of his forehead, so we did a delicate little pair for her." Dudman also had to repair the chest wound that had killed the character. "Which was fun, because Kate [Catherine Rabett] is not the most well-endowed lady, chest-wise. It was quite handy because it meant we could build out her left breast quite substantially and leave the scarring up over her right breast on a very thin prosthetic. It gave the impression that one breast was completely missing. It looked very painful."

Of course, a major element of any FRANKENSTEIN film is its monster. In keeping with the Aldiss novel, Corman and company presented us with a more articulate, intellectual monster, along the line of Shelley's original creation. "We went heavily back to the original concept of the monster," explains Corman. "In Shelely's novel, the monster, although uneducated, was quite intelligent and could give vent to his emotions."

Cast in the role was English Shakespearian actor Nick Brimble, although Corman had originally wanted a tall basketball player capable of quick, athletic movements. "I felt there would be so much prosthetics on the actor's face that the acting wouldn't shine through and that I could loop the voice in," claims the director. "But when we were casting, Nick Brimble read so well that I changed my plan and decided maybe the acting would come through, and I'm very happy I made the change."

In order to insure that Brimble's acting came through, Dudman's twelve-piece prosthetic makeup was designed not to obscure the actor's features. "Basically, you've got Nick Brimble's face surrounded by a lot of foam rubber," explains the makeup artist. "Apart from the nose piece and the edge of the cheeks, the center of the face is his own, so you see what he's doing as an actor. I decided that if you really want to bring out the subtleties in an actor, then whatever you slap on his face has got to be very thin, very subtle. What you do around his face is completely irrelevant."

Brian Aldiss had his timeslip wrecking progressively greater damage on the space-time continuum until, by novel's end, the hero is pursuing the monster and its mate through a continually shifting arctic landscape to the outskirts of an enigmatic, futuristic city. The film simplified this concept by having Buchanan rig a prototype of his particle beam weapon to go off when Frankenstein throws the switch to revive his fiance, catapulting the laboratory and its occupants into a barren, snow-filled landscape of the distant future. "This is a mixed ending," says Corman, "and I make a point of not really stating exactly what it is, other than to imply that mankind is in some trouble but there is hope that Buchanan may be helpful in its survival."

As in the Branagh version, FRANKENSTEIN UNBOUND has Victor bring his fiance back to life—with no intention of letting her become the Monster's Mate.

Nick Brimble played Corman's version of Mary Shelley's Monster in makeup by Nick Dudman.

The new approach to the material, including the ambiguous ending, did not add up to a colossal hit. "It was moderately successful," says Corman of his effort. "It got wonderful reviews and did okay commercially. I'd hope to have done better, but it was all right."

Would UNBOUND do better now after Branagh makes the theme commercial? "It probably would," Corman admits. "In general, I think it's better to be ahead of the trend, but when something as big as the Coppola-Branagh FRANKENSTEIN comes out, it might be better to be a little bit behind, because then you coast a little bit; to a certain extent, you're riding on the wave that's already been created for you."

Corman concludes, "I believe Mary Shelley's book is a true classic. It is a major novel in western civilization, and it has never gotten the credit it deserves. Thevery fact that people still read it indicates that it has elements which are universal." □

Frankenstein

COMPUTER EFFECTS

Applying modern technology to Mary Shelley's monster.

By Alan Jones

MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN, unlike its precursor BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA, had no qualms about relying on modern computer effects to enhance its recreation of an oft-told tale. The task fell to The Computer Film Company, under the supervision of Chris Watts.

"Our first FRANKENSTEIN task was adding sparks to the lightning which strikes during the opening picnic sequence. It was a fairly primitive effect, simple to execute, but maybe the way we did it was unusual. We shot real sparks instead of just animating them in. A program was used which can basically define a path along which those sparks travelled, and that was employed to composite them into the shot. It's not groundbreaking, although I'm not sure anyone else would do it that way."

According to Watts, much of what the CFC do is repair work, removing objects or hands that accidentally find their way into a shot or correcting other errors. "We did have to fix up the Bride of Frankenstein," he recounts. "When the character gets upset and smashes an oil lamp over her head, what they filmed was the actress against a blue-screen and then shot of a couple of hydraulic arms smashing the lamp in mid-air. But when they came to put the two together, the backgrounds didn't match. We had to shoot another background to replace it. The difficulty of any kind of optical work, whether digital or conventional, is making what you've done cut into the movie properly without making the audience aware of the difference."

Watched by Branagh's Victor, Helena Bonham Carter's Elizabeth marvels at the wonder of static electricity dancing on her fingers during an early sequence.

"It was a fairly primitive effect," explains Chris Watts. "We shot real sparks instead of animating them, and a program composited them in the shot.

Watts' team was also asked to increase the excitement quotient in specific shots, such as the one wherein Victor Frankenstein's house explodes. He remarked, "Ah, the dreaded scene 198/1! They just turned up the gas taps on set and had the flames increase in size. Naturally we had to make that a bit more thrilling. It was virtually impossible for Richard Conway's crew to get the flames to go up at the same time, something to do with the gas pressure, I believe, so they did one window at a time. We pinched a window by taking the relevant part of the frame, (since it was a locked-off shot we could take a window at any point) and just slid bits around until we had the ignition of all the windows in the same frame at the same time. Coupled with an appropriate sound effect, you get the impression of a huge explosion rather than just a cheesy series of bangs. We added flames coming from the roof too, and, as it wasn't raining in that shot when they filmed it, we put the rain in. I heard a story that Kenneth Branagh didn't want to get his hair wet! I don't know if that's true."

FRANKENSTEIN's main story is framed with a prologue and an epilogue set in the Arctic Circle. The prologue has the crew of the *Alexander Nevsky*, under the command of Captain Walton (Aidan Quinn), shipwrecked near the North Pole, where they find a frozen Victor Frankenstein who then relates his terrifying memoirs. "The first unit shot a miniature boat down in Swansea [Wales] on a dull, drab December day. And I must stress *day*. Well, we changed it from dull and drab to a rainy, stormy high seas kind of night, complete with lights on the boat and accompanying lighting flashes. There was a great deal of footage shot on the boat stage to which we also added rain. That cuts pretty nicely with the wide shots of the boat in the ocean. It involved taking the light level down on the scenes, finding atmospheric lightning from another source (or drawing it), getting good rain plates shot against a black background and then stacking them all up. I'm really pleased with the end result which doesn't look like a model at all.

"Many of the stage icebergs also looked too polystyrene," he adds. "In one egregious case, the top of an iceberg was clearly peeling off in shot. We fixed that by getting a new piece and tracking it in. You could see the roof of Stage H at Shepperton, too! Our major task here was trying to decide on a cohesive look for the entire sequence and we got our designers to come up with a version of what the North Pole should look like. In reality, the Pole looks pretty boring, and it was our job to make it resemble the place we all think it should be like. So it's our heightened version, one we've taken many artistic liberties with. Strangely enough, we used lots of reference books on the South Pole." □

Victor's obsessive drive in this instance. I never saw Victor as mad. I believed him to be dangerously sane and focused—and that's what is so terrifying about him. He's ruthless and applied more than insane, in the same way I would imagine Hitler was."

Not that he'd ever direct, co-produce and star in a project as big as FRANKENSTEIN again. Branagh continues, "Moment to moment, I enjoyed the experience. But the pressures have been enormous. I've never worked so hard in my life. All I'd really done before FRANKENSTEIN was direct rooms full of people talking. But the very first scenes of the main shoot were the opening with the Russian whaler being tossed about in a storm. A huge boat, special effects, the Arctic, gallons of water pouring everywhere, yeeech! That was a major brown trouser job! It was also hard to get my head around the idea of working with Robert De Niro. I was very intimidated by him at first. Now he's a good friend, but you can imagine what it must have been like.

De Niro became part of the FRANKENSTEIN cast mainly because his friend, Francis Ford Coppola, suggested it. Branagh states, "What actor could invest the creature with the kind of tragic pathos the book has, other than De Niro? There's a central scene in the novel where the Creature puts his point of view to Frankenstein. Did he ever consider the consequences of his actions? Who is he? Does he have a soul? It's done with a sense of betrayal and disappointment, yet with the tremendous simplicity too. You literally see the Creature grow up and lose his innocence at this pivotal moment. It was a quality Boris Karloff also brought to the Whale version. De Niro takes it further by realizing he was 'born' into a world where he has no respect. So-called sophisticated people would see how he was created and turn him into an avenging animal because of their terrified reaction. It's complex, philosophical stuff and it needed someone of De Niro's calibre to bring those shattering subtexts to the surface. De Niro has a beautiful simplicity throughout the whole film and that's the journey he takes you on which is genuinely moving."

SYMPATHY FOR THE DEVIL

"Because De Niro is a first-class actor, you are sympathetic to the Creature," says Veitch, "until he undergoes the character change after Victor refuses to keep his word."

"I will be with you on your wedding night!" Though sympathetic, the Creature resorts to—and later carries out—a fatal threat when Victor refuses his request.

Veitch adds, "He's a creature you can root for, to a point. Because De Niro is a first-class actor, you are sympathetic to the Creature's plight: you understand his traumas and dilemmas. Until he undergoes the character change, after Victor refuses to keep his word, you can identify with him wholeheartedly. De Niro really brings out all the intelligent nuances of the Shelley source material. He's spellbinding. I've never seen an actor of De Niro's stature put up with what he had to do for our schedule. He patiently worked 20 hours a day so we could maintain our pace. Often he'd get a rash from the makeup, which meant he couldn't work two days in a row. He never once complained."

Adds effects supervisor Richard Conway, "If De Niro had anything to do with our department, you only had to tell him once, and he'd do it. You expect that with these big-time actors, because they're professionals. Julia Roberts was the same way on MARY REILLY. You rely on them to make the best of what your department is involved in, and they do."

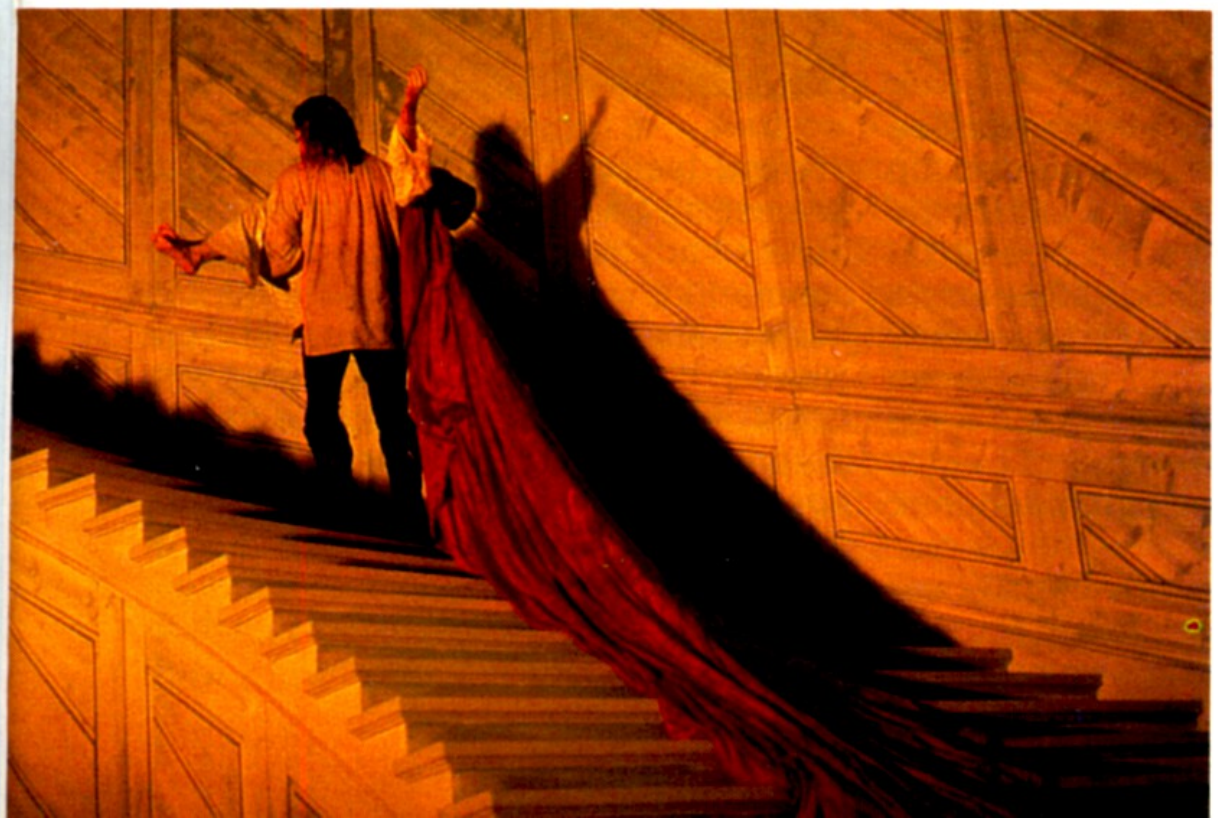
Naturally, TriStar had no problem with Coppola securing De Niro as the Creature. But they were slightly perturbed over Branagh's insistence to cast Helena Bonham Carter as Elizabeth. Veitch says, "TriStar liked the idea of Helena, but thought it may be a wiser move to cast an American actress in the already top-heavy British line-up. Ken fought for Helena, and the studio eventually saw the sense in casting someone who was clearly perfect for the role."

Branagh adds, "I wanted to use actors whose careers were blossoming, and Helena's certainly was after HOWARD'S END. People are going to really be surprised by the brand of fire she brings to Elizabeth, a part made much stronger in the script because I know Mary Shelley would have approved."

Famous for appearing in

Abandoned by his creator, the Creature nevertheless learns to protect himself from the elements.

MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN utilizes some of the implicit doppleganger motif of the book: Victor is haunted by the Creature, like a shadow of himself.



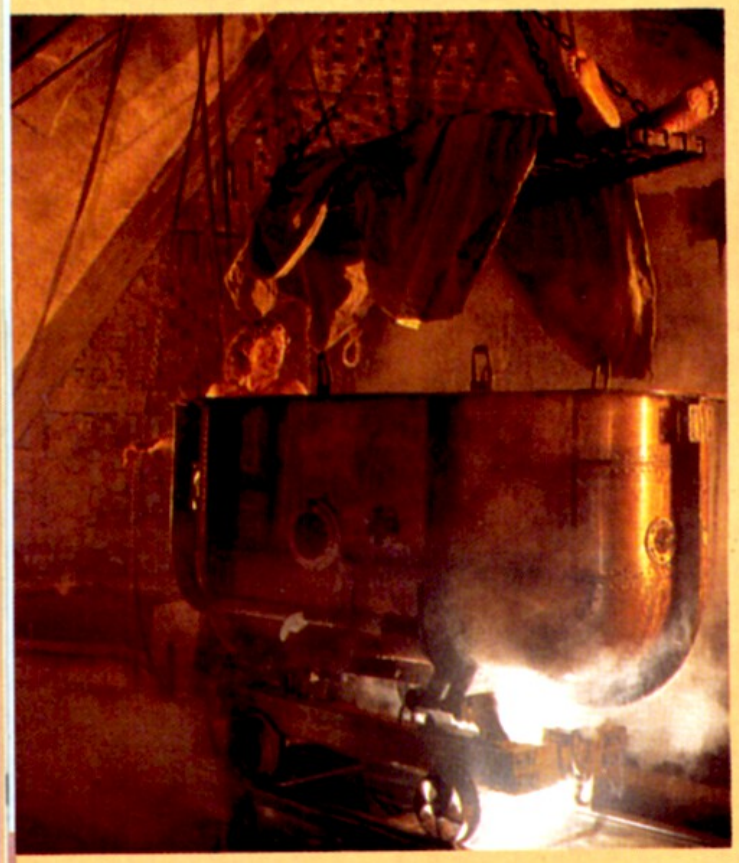
Frankenstein

THE CREATION

Galvanizing a new version of an oft-filmed scene.

By Alan Jones

"I specifically remember how I felt when it came to shooting the key Creation scene," recalls director Kenneth Branagh. "I knew the spotlight would be on this one sequence because that's where I had to deliver the Horror. There have been so many great Creation scenes in past FRANKENSTEIN films, I was absolutely terrified. I spent five days wandering around Tim Harvey's amazing laboratory set construction waiting for inspiration to strike. 'Should I watch the Whale version again to make sure I don't copy anything?' 'Is there a version I've missed that would provide the flash I needed?' In the end, I thought, 'Pull yourself together Branagh and just do it!' And that's what I did."



Although the creation scene is glossed over without details in Mary Shelley's book, it has become a hallmark of film productions, and Branagh's is no exception.

According to computer effects producer Chris Watts, "Ken has tried everything to make it galvanize the audience completely. Lots of sparks and energy radiating into the womb-like sarcophagus in which the Creature is being cooked. So we tried putting electricity streaming linearly down into it, and then we decided to include rays and an aura. The scene was shot with real sparks for the big stuff, but when it came to close proximity with actors we ended up adding them in. The same went for the rubber electric eels crafted by special effects supervisor Richard Conway's team. Now, electric eels don't generally spark on their own, so we added those in and also removed the rods and wires which drove them through the phallic shaped glass tube and controlled their mouths."

"Getting the eels to work properly was a challenge," Conway admits. "The current through the tube was incredible! Through the tube we had two wires. Each wire was attached to either side of the gills, so as the eels travelled we shortened the lengths alternately to make them wriggle. We've always been able to remove wires somehow, but with digital technology, you don't get quality reduction."

Despite post-production enhancement, much of the Creation sequence was accomplished live. "The whole set was a 'working' set," says Conway. "Tim Harvey's designs were wonderful, and it ended up nice and lumpy with lots of pulleys and chains. You wouldn't see anything like it in a 19th century science manual, but it was designed in that arcane idiom. It was a complete cheat but an 'authentic' cheat. I have a great admiration for the early 1800 time period, so it was a joy to craft the pseudo-technology of the era. All the low-tech equipment had to be built: the ceiling tracks transporting the Creature's body around the laboratory, the womb-like steel sarcophagus, the big testicle-shaped bladder above it, and the 14-inch diameter glass tube, ribbed with steel, which is rammed into the boiling copper to let dozens of electric eels steam around the Creature like huge black sperm. Ken Branagh wanted all of that sexual imagery incorporated to put across the feeling of insemination. I think we overdid it really!" □

the critically acclaimed Merchant-Ivory productions A ROOM WITH A VIEW, MAURICE and HOWARD'S END, the sparkling and witty actress wanted to appear in FRANKENSTEIN mainly as a reaction against her demure screen persona. "I'm sick of people thinking I'm this English rose in flouncy frocks!" she insists. "Okay, I might still be in period costume in FRANKENSTEIN, but I feel Elizabeth is going to explode that myth somewhat. Ken can be a very persuasive man, and he told me he had chosen me for the part because he knew I wouldn't make the obvious choices. Elizabeth is a complete shadow in the Shelley novel—the colorless love interest, almost—as she goes from being his adopted sister to his sweetheart. I saw it as my job to rescue her from that passive reductive role and make her a fully rounded character in her own right."

Helping the actress get a handle on her character was Branagh's vision of how the role fit into the grand scheme of things. "FRANKENSTEIN is about the eternal triangle and elemental love, as the relationship between Victor, Elizabeth, and the Creature is the central issue," she remarks. "So is the whole moral discourse about the essence of life, which throws up accessible arguments about genetic engineering and asks questions like, 'What are we doing with the world? What are our basic instincts and the things we control? Can we change things, why do we want to, and is it good or bad to try?'"

FRANKENSTEIN represented an adventure for Bonham Carter too, because she'd never worked on a picture so completely reliant on studio interiors. She remarks, "It was like entering a fairy tale realm every day. Each set was huge, the Blue Ballroom was wonderful, and it became the heightened reality world where horrible things kept bursting the fantasy bubble. I've never been involved in such a big vision before, and it was fabulous to work with Robert De Niro. His reading of the Creature is quite radical and will surprise you. He helped out on all my close-ups and was very generous with no self-involvement at all. Our work together was very tiring, yet he never complained once or came out with any diva nonsense. It's always nice to find out superstars don't have the attitude that's supposed to go with their status.

"Obviously Ken being an actor meant we were all well treated," she continues. "It was odd being directed by him in costume and even stranger when he'd say 'Cut' in the middle of a scene you were heavily into. I thought Ken was remarkably relaxed throughout the shoot considering what he had on his plate. While he looked robust, sexy and handsome as Victor, as the director of FRANKENSTEIN he also seemed possessed by some similar grandiose vision. The theme of the story and Ken's treatment of it mirrored each other. Both tried to push the boundaries of possibility: Frankenstein scientifically, Ken filmically. But Ken was always there for us. He understands the psychology of acting and tailored the scenes to help us concentrate. A lot of the movie was done using Steadicam techniques. Ken wanted the narrative to have this immense driving force and energy so none of the actors could sit back and coast. I can only speak for myself, but I felt this method really gave my performance an edge while giving the whole story a modern focus."

Although producer Coppola would have been on the set every day if he'd felt his constant presence or support was needed, Branagh was relieved his executive producer left him alone to get on with the job in hand. "Francis was helpful in bringing De Niro and myself together, and he's seen dailies, but that's about it," says Branagh. "He has too much respect as a filmmaker himself. He's put up with interference in the past and knows how important it is for the director to be left alone. I've been very lucky with my producers. Sidney Pollack protected me on DEAD AGAIN because it was a weird movie for a major studio to be making and he knew he'd have to keep the suits at bay. Although we've been on a different continent, Francis has more or less done the same."

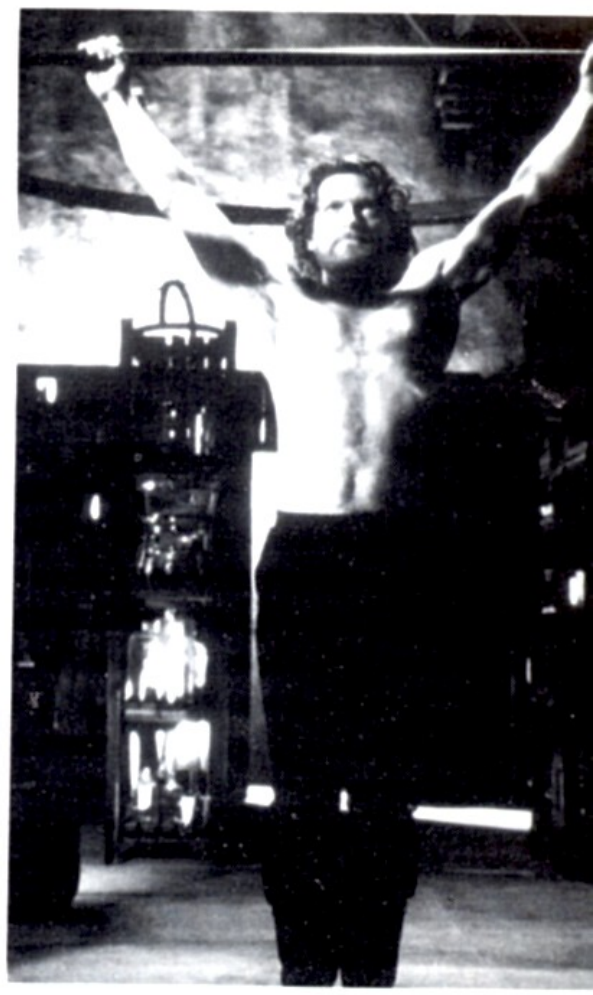
FRANKENSTEIN opens in America two years after Branagh was first contacted with the tentative offer to direct. He claims his enthusiasm for it has remained undiminished through all of the time it was at the center of his professional life. "Mary Shelley has given more to me than I've given to her to date. Looking back it was hard not to be thrilled while making the movie. Energy was coming at me from all directions—the cast, the crew, the source material—and I channeled it back the other way. Before reading Shelley's book I thought FRANKENSTEIN was your typical mad-scientist-versus-Neanderthal-monster tale. Instead, when I finally took the time to read it, I found a complicated thriller, a Gothic romance full of rip-roaring high adventure that was provocative and compelling. It's a much greater book than *Dracula* in my view. If there really are only six basic stories in the world then *Frankenstein* has to be one of them. Now its time has come again. And if we've reinterpreted it for a new generation correctly, and captured its profound simplicity and timelessness, then I'm happy." □

PARADISE FOUND

"Before reading Shelley's book, I thought it was your typical mad scientist tale," says Branagh. "Instead, I found a complicated thriller, provocative and compelling."

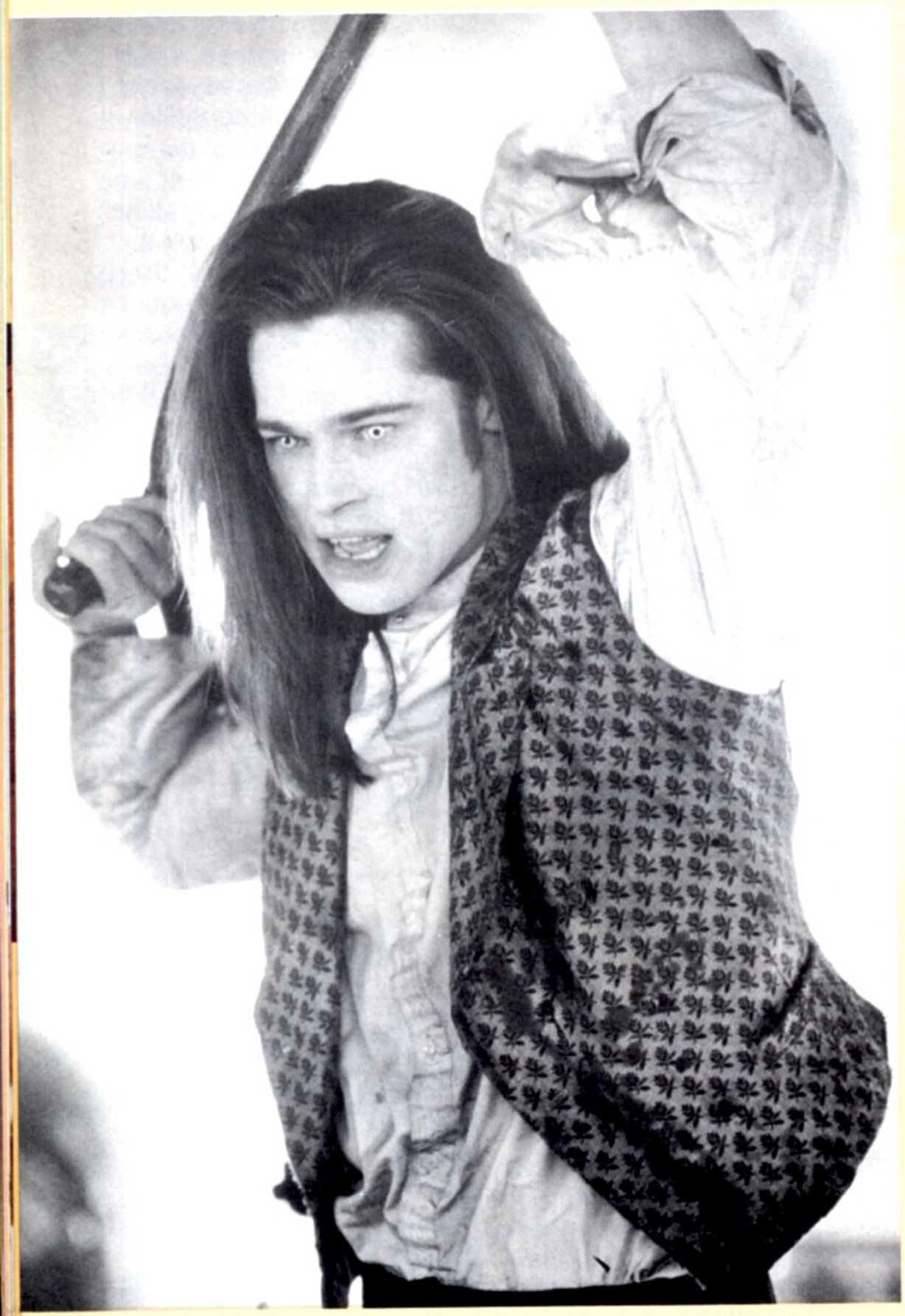
In the framing story, the explorer Walton (Aidan Quinn, third from right) hopes to achieve glory by navigating to the North Pole, only to stumble on Victor.

Branagh flexes his pecs during the creation scene, emphasizing the erotic subtext of the material.



INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE

Anne Rice's masterpiece finally reaches the screen.



Brad Pitt as Louis, the tortured protagonist of Anne Rice's first novel. Though commonly considered a passive character, like Hamlet, Louis manages to extract violent revenge against those who destroyed his companions.

By Steve Biodrowski & Alan Jones

Roll over, Stephen King, and tell Clive Barker the news: on November 18, nearly two decades after its publication, a big-screen version of INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE will finally be released by Warner Brothers. Although expectations are somewhat muted by the Cruise casting controversy (see "Bonfire of the Vampires," on page 36), the novel by Anne Rice overturns the moribund cliches that have deadened the genre for years and lifts the vampire to the level of serious literature. With source material like this, handled by the talented writer-director Neil Jordan (THE COMPANY OF WOLVES), the film could be rejuvenating serum needed to raise the genre from the grave. The question now is: Will the film live up to the book?

The project had been in development practically since the novel was published in 1976, going through countless drafts until executive producer David Geffen secured the rights and had the brainstorm of hiring Jordan, fresh off winning an Oscar for his THE CRYING GAME screenplay.

"I'd been a big fan of the book since the day it came out, but the rights were at Paramount," Geffen recalls. "It's been a labor of love from the day I got it. It's been a very difficult book to get made, or

Antonio Banderas as Armand in The Theatres of the Vampires in Paris.

Paramount would have made it. It has lots of issues that were very difficult for people: the fact that there's a child killer, the fact that there's homoerotic aspects. It took someone as talented as Neil Jordan to write a script that dealt with all of this stuff in a way that was if anything more faithful to the book than anyone expected was possible."

Aside from the potentially offensive subject matter, other difficulties stemmed from the book's loose structure. With

Claudia and Louis cower from the advance of the Parisian coven, come to try them for the murder of Lestat.

On stage each night, the vampires drain a human victim in front of a rapt audience who believe they are watching actors made up as vampires.

"I have walked the streets like the Grim Reaper and fed on human life for my own existence. I am...immortal and damned, like angels put in hell by God."

none of the mechanics of suspense associated with stories of the undead (i.e. vampire hunters tracking them down to their lair), the novel is basically a saga of one vampire's quest for answers about the nature of his existence. Also, Rice takes an unconventional approach to the mythology, which can be slightly off-putting to traditionalists. This later question, however, never plagued Geffen. "That's a given: these are Anne Rice's rules of the game. The only question was:

No, that's not a film flub. Rice's vampires cast reflections because, unlike Dracula, they are not soulless.

'Can you get a screenplay?' because it's a very complicated book to adapt," admits the executive, who discarded all previous attempts and gave the author herself first crack at coming up with a new script. "The problem is Anne Rice is a novelist, not a screenwriter. She created a context—a beginning, middle, and end—and then Neil Jordan was able to take Anne Rice's screenplay and rewrite it into a script more faithful than even she had been."

Jordan found Anne Rice's script to be "far too theatrical and florid. Then I read the book and saw immediately how I could turn it into a great movie. I called David Geffen and told him if he'd let me have the complete freedom I was used to, I'd love to adapt the book into a screenplay."

Jordan believes that previous scripts didn't work because, "People were afraid of the themes in it, and they tried to make them palatable by shrouding them in metaphors. No one was able to tell the story in the actual book with integrity and honesty. I had to reintroduce elements into my screenplay that Anne Rice thought should be left out in hers. What she wrote wasn't as true to the book as my script."

Jordan's contribution was the subject of an arbitration by the Writers Guild of America which denied him credit for various reasons which have more to do with the politics of the Guild's attitude to writer-directors. And Anne Rice is now claiming sole credit for the script. So what has she been going on about all this past year? It can't have the character flaws she's repeatedly said it does, can it? It must represent her vision of the book after all! The Guild have a ruling that says a director must prove he's rewritten at least two-thirds [sic] of the existing script before he gets a credit. If I'd know that going in, I wouldn't have made the movie."

In fairness to Rice, one should point out the the WGA arbitration is automatic when a director seeks a co-credit. Also, when she objected to sharing credit in *Movieline* magazine (Jan-Feb 1994), it was for precisely the reason Jordan himself states: "...the WGA will

The questionably cast Cruise plays the villain of the piece, Lestat, who unlike Louis revels in the bloodlust of his vampire nature, toying with his victims.

only allow a director to share writing credit if he brings over 50% new material. I don't know if he's done that or not. Maybe he has.... The last draft I did see was an in-progress draft that was extremely close to the book and my script. He actually put things back from the book that I had left out, so it's possible that he can get credit for that as original material."

This is a case of what logicians call "verbal disagreement." Though Rice and Jordan are phrasing their statements in an opposing fashion, regarding who deserves credit, they are substantially in agreement on the facts of the case. Clearly, *both* contributed to the script, and even Jordan seems to agree that question really comes down to the percentage required by the WGA. (Though Jordan may give the impression that he circumvented Rice's script in favor of her book, he does retain elements she added, such as giving Louis a late wife and child, replacing the dead brother in the novel.)

Arguments over credit aside, Jordan clearly understands the fascinating appeal Rice's vampires have for her readers. "Why people loved the book so much, in my opinion, is Anne Rice turns the vampires into angels," Jordan points out. "It reminded me a lot of *Paradise Lost*, for she explores quite serious spiritual dilemmas in context. The whole idea of losing the light, what heaven is, the skewed sense of redemption. From her strange Irish-Catholic background, Rice has taken all these supernatural and mythological elements and made them very real for these characters. I know the environment because I come from the same superstitious background myself. Reading *Interview with the Vampire* is like reading the lives of the Saints, but turned on their head with everything upside down and weird."

"Children of Satan! Children of God! Is this [what] obsesses you so that you must make us gods and devils when the only power that exists is inside ourselves?"

Louis tells his story to Daniel Molloy (Christian Slater, replacing the late River Phoenix. The interviewer is not named in the Chronicles until a later book.

For Jordan, the central focus of the plot is that "Louis wants to die but hasn't got the courage to kill himself. So he's been turned into a vampire by Lestat and now finds himself in a [master-slave] relationship. Yet he's made his choice, and he's now stuck with it for eternity. He's a reluctant vampire, because he never realized how his immortal condition would involve killing human beings every night. The more reluctant he becomes, the more furious his mentor, Lestat, becomes. In a bizarre way, INTERVIEW is the story of their relationship above all else. When Louis finally summons up the courage to leave, Lestat makes a child vampire, Claudia, so they become a perverse undead family. For Louis will never desert his young daughter, specifically created for that purpose."

Jordan directs Pitt as Louis, a vampire so enamored of his new sensory perceptions that he can stare enraptured at a candle flame for hours.

Producer Stephen Woolley (THE CRYING GAME) adds, "The series of relationships goes from Lestat and Louis, then to Louis, Lestat, and Claudia, then to Armand and Louis, and finally to Louis and the Interviewer. Each character must have some extra attraction, so we understand why Louis would leave Claudia for Armand, for example. These are big decisions for the characters, who must live with their actions for eternity."

Jordan concludes, "Louis is ostensibly the most sympathetic character. He's the human being raped and ravaged and turned into this undead thing. Lestat is the 'monster,' while Claudia is a child with no heart. We weep for her and her condition while she does dreadful things. I wanted audiences to understand each perspective. Lestat's is clear: 'This is what I told you you'd become, so why do you hate me?' As an audience you'll understand what he means, so you'll be subjectively participating in the savagery and cruelty in a way that's deeply disturbing. I like movies that make me think, 'Fuck, I can't go out now, I'm so afraid.'"

Despite the general allegiance to Rice's text, changes have been made, perhaps with an eye to setting up the sequels wherein Lestat takes center stage. A chase has been added across the San Francisco Bridge, with Cruise behind the wheel of a convertible, and a member of the effects crew claims that a "cat-in-the closet" surprise ending has been tagged on. Effects supervisor Stan Winston admits, "The ending is different than in the book. I will say that the ending in the movie is more satisfying and fun. I think you always should feel good when leaving a movie. If there's a way of turning a tragedy into something accepting, I as an audience would love for the filmmakers to let me go out feeling okay."

But how can one add a happy denouement to a narrative that won't support it? The book ends on a note of "despair," to use the interviewer's word, and Louis insists it could not have ended any other way. Even Khayman, an elder vampire who reads Louis's interview in *Queen of the Damned,* sums the text up in three words: Behold the void.

Says Jordan of attempting to put his spin on the material, "This film will be better than Rice's book, which was overwritten and wandered terribly while containing some marvelous ideas. It may not deliver to Rice fans, but it will be the best adaptation for lovers of the first book in the Lestat series." □

INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE

PRODUCTION DESIGNER

Dante Ferretti, an architect for all ages.

Top: Ferretti's preproduction painting for Lestat's New Orleans mansion. Inset: on the swamp set, Louis and Claudia dispose of Lestat's (not so) lifeless body.

By Steve Biodrowski & Alan Jones

With creative input from production designer Dante Ferretti (THE ADVENTURES OF BARON MUNCHAUSEN) and director of photography Philippe Rousselot (DIVA), director Neil JOrdan was able to set a visual tone he described as "a severe feeling of decay. The look is baroque and incredibly rich. We didn't go for period accuracy. If I had any inspiration at all in this area, it came from German director Max (LA RONDE) Ophuls. I wanted that sort of decorative elegance, plus his great European sensibility, for the six different periods we had to recreate from 1791 to present day."

Achieving this look required building sixty-five sets, thirty-four of them on the stages of Pinewood Studios, England, including the huge 007 stage. "When we started the film, it was big but not this big," explains Ferretti. "In preproduction we were planning to use more locations. I found some, but we built almost everything."

For his inspiration, Ferretti looked to the "feeling and atmosphere" of Rice's book but admits, "When you read something, sometimes it's hard to find the same sensation" in reality. "When I came to New Orleans for the first time, I found all the old buildings not in the city—well, some in the French quarter—but in the outlying county and plantation homes. I had to rebuild all of the waterfront, with the wharfs, and a section of the city. We changed the French quarter back to wood, because the French quarter today is iron. I also built a swamp. You can't believe it: we went to New Orleans, which is surrounded by swamp, and I built a new swamp in the studio! For effects, like the sunrise, it was better to shoot on the stage, because you have more control of the look. Also, we did a lot of matte painting in combination with computers, but it's not a special effects film. Philippe Rousselot did fantastic lighting to make it look like a painting. Of this I'm proud, because sometimes when you do this kind of film it looks like computer stuff. This looks like a hand-made film."

Ferretti adds, "I don't like the word 'challenge,' but that's the only word in English I know. The Old World stuff in Europe was easier for me, because I'm closer to that culture. Also, you get much more in New Orleans, because it's very hot, very humid. It's a different atmosphere from Europe, which is more cold. I did something different for each: more powerful, full-color in New Orleans, because it's more Creole, and more monochromatic in Europe because it's a more sad kind of place. That period in the 19th century was more serious and boring in Paris."

Despite the subject matter, a cliched, spooky atmosphere was definitely out of the question. "No, no, no—I hate this kind of stuff! This is an emotional story; it's a sensual film. It's about vampires, but it's not about cobwebs and spiders" Ferretti exclaims, adding that he wanted a glamorous rather than a Gothic look. "Of course there is some stuff there because it's in the story, but if there's a church, it's not a Gothic church. I think we achieved this, but it's up to other people to say.

"I always like to use research by painting, because what the painter puts on canvas is always another kind of reality. If you're a photographer, you shoot reality; when you're a painter, you change reality. Normally what I do, and what I did in this film, was like a painter: I work very close to reality, but it's always my reality. I try not to reinvent it but to be like an architect in the period. I close my eyes and say, 'I'm living in this century. What do I have to do?'" □

BEΨOND Dracula

NEW AGE EVIL

We examine the post-modern vampire with experts Leonard Wolf and David J. Skal.

If you haven't read The Vampire Chronicles, you're probably wondering, "Why all the commotion about filming INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE? Haven't we seen hundreds of vampires films?"

The answer is simple: these vampires are different. Bram Stoker gave us a figure of clearly Satanic evil, who nonetheless has fascinated us for nearly 100 years with his darkly attractive qualities. Subsequent authors and filmmakers have seized upon those attractive qualities, both in the character of Dracula and other vampires, and emphasized them, often offering revisionist takes which make the vampires out to be sympathetic, even moral characters. Sometimes, they're good souls cursed with an affliction; other times, they're ordinary people coping with an addiction. Often, they're persecuted, their evil existing only in the eyes of vampire hunters, who are portrayed as religious fanatics.

In all of these cases, some dimension of grandeur is lost when the vampire is no longer defined as evil. Yet terms like Evil with a capital E seem so antiquated by modern standards that traditional vampires seem like faery tale figures with no more real power to frighten.

Anne Rice solved this problem by giving us a "new evil." Her vampires exist outside the boundaries of traditional lore, able to look on crosses and tread on holy ground, yet their actions are clearly monstrous. In effect, she has managed to eat her cake and have it too, creating characters who are sympathetic because of their quest for meaning and new values to replace the old ones which no longer bind them, even while their actions are horrible beyond question.

To get a better perspective on what Rice has achieved, *Imagi-Movies* consulted Dracula scholars Leonard Wolf and David J. Skal. Wolf authored *The Annotated Dracula* and *The Annotated Frankenstein* (reissued in revised form as *The Essential Dracula* and *The Essential Frankenstein*), and acted as consultant on BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA and MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN. Skal wrote *Holly-*

THE VAMPIRE LESTAT

"Don't you see?" I said softly. "It's a new age. It requires a new evil. And I am that new evil." I paused, watching him. "I am the vampire for these times."

"We have before us...the rich feasts that conscience cannot kill and mortal men cannot know without regret. God kills, and so shall we...for no creatures under God are as we are, none so like him as ourselves, dark angels not confined to the stinking limits of hell but wandering His earth and all its kingdoms."

wood Gothic: The Tangled Web of Dracula from Novel to Stage to Screen, The Monster Show (just out in paperback), and the upcoming scholarly encyclopedia *V is for Vampire*. Surprisingly, despite a mutual admiration for each other's work, the two had never met until we got them together and asked, as fans of Stoker's traditional fiction, what their initial reactions were upon reading *Interview with the Vampire* and how they thought Anne Rice had advanced the genre:

LEONARD WOLF: Keep in mind: she was a student of mine. I read the novel in manuscript when Anne had it rejected by a couple of places. I was not in any way distressed by the extrapolation from Stoker—you know, the sort of universe of blood she imagined is much different from his. I thought it was a remarkable fiction; I was very much taken by her resplendent prose style. I was in the process of giving her advice when Knopf took it. I think there are some problems with the book to this minute, but they're neither here nor there. In the course of what finally happened it was a stunning success.

DAVID SKAL: I was very impressed by it. I realized immediately that she had singlehandedly revived the vampire genre. She had given it the same kind of shot in the arm that Stoker had in the 1890s. I actually think it's the best written of all the books, in terms of its controlled prose style and its overall impact. What impressed me most was the ambiguous use of metaphor. She wasn't writing a one-to-one allegory; there were a lot of things in there, particularly the use of the vampire as a kind of loose symbol of a an alternative, supernatural kind of sexuality that had resonance with gay culture.

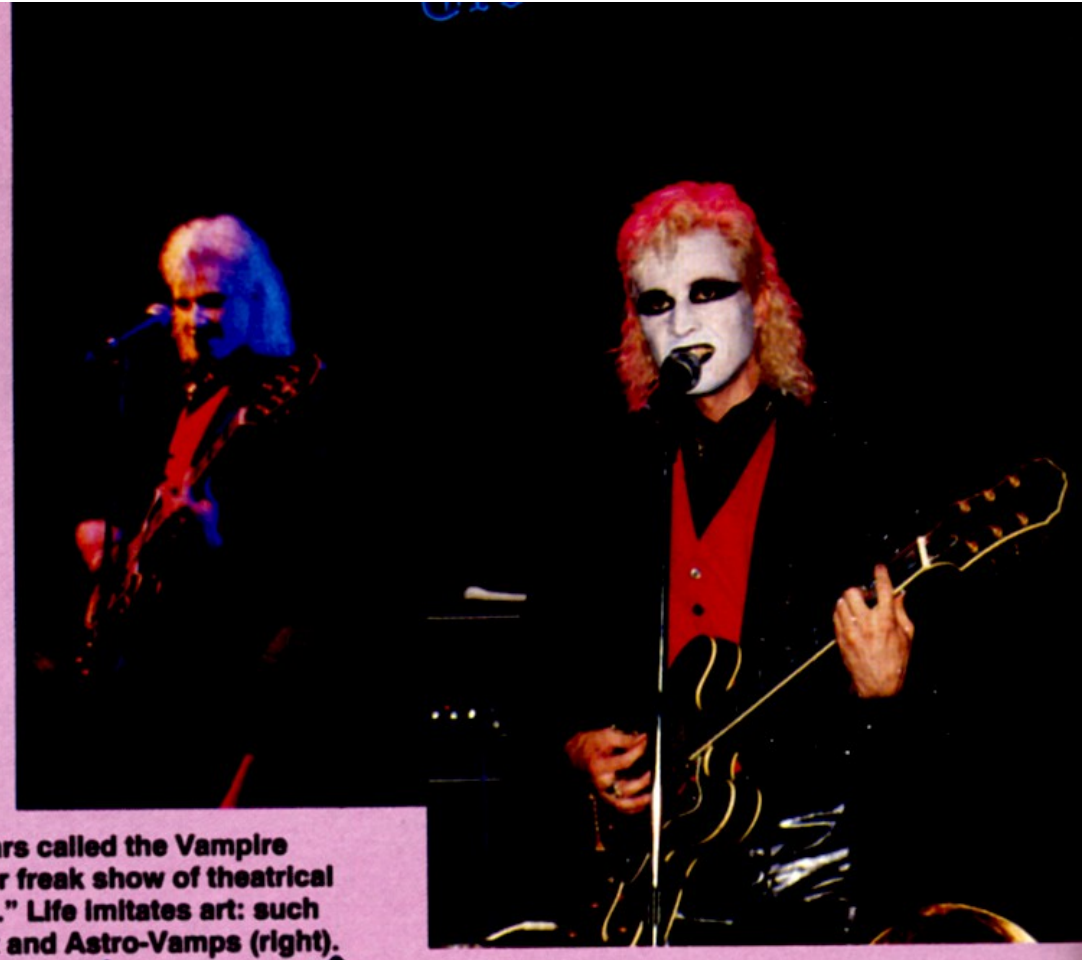
But the pure story-telling momentum of it! I read it at a single sitting. You almost hallucinate the book. It is such a cinematic book that I was always puzzled that filmmakers had taken so long to do anything with it, because it seemed to lend itself to a scene-by-scene, chapter-by-chapter translation, without a lot of trouble, but obviously there was a tremendous amount of trouble.

LW: I always wondered whether they would ever make a movie out of it, because the primary image, of the daddy vampire and the baby vampire in the same coffin, absolutely goes counter to anything the American moral psyche is prepared to accept. I think it has taken this long because we've moved a long distance down the way of what life situations and sexual situations an audience is prepared to hear about. I never could figure out how they would put this on film. I still don't know how INTERVIEW is going to play, with little Claudia.

"What we have with Anne Rice is a peculiar kind of extrapolation from the Victorian reticence which would not allow one to know that, in the scene with the three female vampires bending over Harker, the unheard word is 'suck.'"

DS: It doesn't surprise me, because vampires always get away with this sort of thing. We allow them the moral latitude that we don't allow ourselves. I think this is one of the functions they serve, to a great extent. I talk a lot in my books about the way the vampire absorbs a lot of anxiety about the AIDS epidemic in the last ten years. It becomes a safe place to explore notions of aggression and sexuality. It's also a very blatant metaphor for rape. It's one of the few acceptable places in popular culture for men and women to meditate, process, or fantasize about sexual violence.

LW: I think that what David is saying has something to do with what Stoker did unconsciously and what Rice does consciously. Stoker was not aware that his blood exchange stood for every conceivable sexual permutation and combination either real or imaginable. What we have with Anne Rice is a peculiar kind of extrapolation from the Victorian reticence which would not al-



The 19th-century Theatres des Vampyres (left) prefigures a series of 20th-century bars called the Vampire Connection. Explains Louis in *The Vampire Lestat*, "The mortals who come are a regular freak show of theatrical types—punk youngsters, artists, those done up in black capes and white plastic fangs." Life imitates art: such places now exist, featuring Gothic rock bands with monikers like London After Midnight and Astro-Vamps (right).

low one to know that in the scene with the three female vampires bending over Harker the unheard word is 'suck.' That resonates and thrills the viewer and the reader. I'm suggesting, and so I think is David, that that maintains in Anne Rice's work to this day: no one is quite comfortable with mother-son sexuality, father-daughter sexuality, brother-sister sexuality, male-male sexuality, female-female sexuality, infantile sexuality. But with the blood exchange, it is always present, without anyone having to take the guilt for being thrilled by watching it. In a peculiar way, what that tells me is that we have not yet outlived the Victorianism of the Puritan tradition in which we have been raised. We're still getting a terrific charge out of what, if you're paying attention, is a moment of murder. One of the things that the Anne Rice fiction makes its readers do is stop counting how many bodies there are. You're not allowed to ask, 'Who died? What kind of life was that?' They simply become the living pieces of...I know the metaphor that occurs to me and I'm going to risk it...they're the Host. What was bread is now transformed into flesh, and you are allowed to devour it without remembering that this flesh had a mind and a soul of its own. My next link goes: it's a form of what we might call 'spiritual pornography,' where we get these *horrible* things happening that thrill us in the foreground, where it's

BEΨOND Dracula

THE VAMPIRE CONNECTION

Undead poets and Death-rockers keep the Gothic flame burning.

By Steve Biodrowski

I'll take you once again
and feed upon desire
from the sweat of your flesh
and gently parted lips
that breathe for me their last
as hence your life does slip
you are an angel dear
as to the ground you fall
now another child cries
from far beyond the wall
and in a lover's swoon
I fall upon my knees
my face toward the moon
and beg forgiveness please

—from "Angel at My Feet"
by Susanne Rheinschild
in Rouge et Noir #4

Since the modern literary vampire was born at a gathering attended by poets Lord Byron and Percy Shelley, it's appropriate that today a group of poets are keeping the undead tradition alive. Likewise, if you enjoy Anne Rice's descriptions of Vampire Bars with names like Dracula's Daughter, Bela Lugosi, and Carmilla, you may be pleased to know that similar places actually exist, bearing names like Helter Skelter and Obituary.

Although the milieu of rock-and-roll and poetry may seem distinct, there *is* a connection. The Undead Poets' Society, which conducts annual readings in October, began after founder Meg Read-Thompson wrote a play called *Theatre of the Vampires* seven years ago and cast friends from the L.A. Gothic club scene, where it's not uncommon to see groups named Christian Death, Type-O Negative, Shadow Project, London after Midnight, and Astro-Vamps. "it's a given that people who hang out there are interested in horror," says Thompson. "I realized there were lots of artistically talented people and that my skill lay more in organization and promotion. So I decided to take what I had learned and do something for the underground community. I had always been interested in literature; I was a pretty low-established published poet, so I decided I didn't want to do a fanzine but something more legitimate that would be just as acceptable in a university as it would be in a Gothic Rock club. That's why I chose the chapbook format. By not doing a fanzine, I was able to get into classrooms, where it's

taken a lot more seriously."

The resulting publication, *Rouge et Noir*, is in its fifth issue. "I have university professors who write for us and use it in their classroom, and I have people in rock bands that write for us," says Thompson. Some of the later include Tony Lestat (a pseudonym, perhaps?) from Wreckage and Linda Rainwater from Ex-Voto. "I feel I've been able to get the talent out there. Many of the people I've published have gone on to publish in other places."

Denise Dumars is one Undead Poet who has gone on. She and writing partner, Nancy Ellis Taylor, have been commissioned by Max J. Rosenberg (co-producer, with the late Milton Subotsky, of ASYLUM, et al.) to write a script titled DRACULA'S GRANDDAUGHTER. "I was a pretty well-known poet in Southern California," recounts Dumars, who had organized more conventional poetry readings. "What's interesting is that even the best poetry readings don't get huge audiences; poetry is not something that appeals to a mass audience in this country, unfortunately. But with the vampire poetry, we got huge audiences; we've had to turn people away. I'm kind of at a loss for all of this. Vampires are not necessarily my favorite thing in horror. I like people like Clive Barker, who come up with their own mythologies. But the vampire seems to have a kind of appeal that goes beyond people who are into horror."

Susanne Rheinschild attributes the popularity of vampires to their "mystery—the unknown is always appealing. Hollywood has certainly portrayed them like that, and the way they've been written up makes them seductive."

Rheinschild became involved with the group after seeing a blurb in the book review section of the *LA TIMES*. "My darker side had always been kept under wraps," she recalls. "I had been writing for about two years, and was somewhat apprehensive to share the genre poetry that I preferred with friends and family members. I found later there were several people who were quite interested themselves but had the same trepidations. I was shocked, really, at the number of people. Finding a group like the Undead Poets, who really have a passion, was a comfort for me, because I have a passion for it. It makes a good outlet for my dark side."

Of this previously untapped well, Thompson states, "I think it's important that that talent gets legitimized. It's a fringe group, who look real odd—you know, you hold your little kid closer when they're walking in the shopping center. I know from my own personal life that when you feel disenfranchised like that, you don't think that much of what you do is very important. When everybody tells you there's something wrong with you from the time you're 12, by the time you're in your mid-20s you start to believe them. So I could say, 'There really isn't anything wrong with you. There's lots of people interested in these things, and there always have been. There's very legitimate literary and artistic areas that totally support the things you're interested in: from Edgar Allan Poe and Rimbaud to Baudelaire and Goethe.'" □

Thompson, founder and "Precious Mother of our black expression," according to one Undead Poet.

Readings are held in Los Angeles and New Orleans in October. For additional information or a copy of *Rouge et Noir*, contact Preternatural Productions at P.O. Box 786, Fort Huachuca, AZ 85613.

Gloria Holden, as DRACULA'S DAUGHTER, was so big an influence on Rice that she named a vampire bar after the character in *The Vampire Lestat*.

merely a blood exchange, but they thrill us profoundly in our spiritual center when what we see is that it's a corruption of soul, an exchange of disasters that are deeply rooted in our relationships not just to family but in our relationship to God.

DS: I find that people do experience vampires in this way but also with this blind spot of psychological denial. Most people who enjoy vampire fiction I don't think would consciously analyze it the way Leonard just did, although he's right on the money. One of the reasons the vampire doesn't reflect in the mirror, traditionally, is because if he did, we would see our own face.

LW: I think I said that verbatim, David, in one of my books.

DS: Well, I know I did in one of mine—it's another universal truth! I'm amazed at the number of very conservative and even born-again Christian types I've met who just love Dracula and vampires and seem completely unaware of a lot of these dimensions: the almost blasphemous inversion of Christianity. It doesn't even penetrate their consciousness on any level, but they're drawn to it again and again, as if it were a ritual.

I think a lot of the appeal of vampires and other monsters is that they don't reveal everything; they suggest. It's like an optical illusion that keeps shifting back and forth from one thing to another. I think the fascination becomes lost if people understand it too literally.

IM: So, as in psychoanalysis, when these elements are unconscious they have power

Klaus Kinski in NOSFERATU: "the endlessly aging face that could not die..."

QUEEN OF THE DAMNED

"There is something obscene about this novel. It makes these beings seem attractive. You don't realize it at first; it's a nightmare... Then all of a sudden you're comfortable."

over our imagination, whereas if you bring them to the conscious by analyzing them, you dissipate their strength.

DS: Well, those of us who make our livings analyzing these things disagree; we just think it makes them all the more interesting! For the person on the street, approaching the vampire is approaching dangerous psychological territory. That's why it's a very stylized genre, usually with rigid conventions and trappings, and sometimes people become upset when those trappings are disregarded, because it becomes unsafe.

LW: I think one of the things that makes *Dracula* in some sense a very powerful fiction is precisely that two groups of people are repressing: Stoker and the audience. The only allegory Stoker consciously understood was that of the chivalric hunt, the saintly young men under the tutelage of Dr. Van Helsing going on a pilgrimage to (a) combat evil—that's what he understood consciously—and (b) learn how to do that sexual thing. Each of them carries a pointy object; the largest is the stake. It's interesting that the person who's allowed to use the stake is the designated groom.

But Anne Rice is not repressed. She knows what she's doing. What she adds to the dialogue is the canniness. She's a much finer writer, line by line, than Stoker. Stoker, as I've often said, was a fifth-, seventh-, tenth-rate writer who somehow stumbled into making a firstrate magnificent work of fiction. But Anne manipulates prose; she's a sensualist of the imagination, and she makes a blood scene become a baroque experience, not just because of the furniture and the wealth of the characters but because of the extraordinary nuances of the blood exchange. There's a moment when Lestat vampirizes his mother [in *The Vampire Lestat*]. I have it in front of me, and [listen to] the rush of heat and blood in the capacity for Rice to write, 'She was flesh and blood and mother and lover and all things beneath the cruel pressure of my fingers and lips, everything I had ever desired. I drove my teeth into her, feeling her stiffen and gasp, and I felt my mouth grow wide to catch the hot flood when it came.' You don't get that kind of writing in Stoker, because he doesn't know it's happening.

DS: In some ways, she's probably the first post-modern vampire author, in that she does have this very conscious awareness of everything that's gone before, and she's manipulating and juxtaposing the work of many past writers. In some way, she harkens back to before Stoker. Stoker departed from earlier vampire literature; in fact, our 20th-century conception of Dracula is really a hybrid of Stoker and the earlier Byronic vampire, who was a very seductive creature, with all the trappings of the tragic nobleman. Stoker's Dracula, people forget, especially those who haven't gone back to read the novel, was really a kind of Darwinian superman; he's an animal. Stoker probably was disturbed on some level by the Darwinian scientific currents of the time. I don't think he was writing a formal treatise against it, but the earlier vampire of the Romantic era was more aligned to the Gothic-occult trappings. I think Stoker's Dracula is very hung up on science.

LW: The charm came from Bela Lugosi—it was Hollywood's idea to put him in a tuxedo. Some of that charm is at least hinted at in Polidori's 'The Vampyre.' You don't get it at all in *Varney the Vampire,* which as you know I adore. It's an utterly impossible image of a Byronic hero without any sensibility whatsoever.

Here by the way we should probably talk a little bit about what Anne Rice does remarkably: she's created an entire race of vampires, all of whom feel isolated. They are the post-existential alien race. Stoker does not hint at that except in one brief scene where we get a slight touch of poignancy, when we see a basin with red water in it and a soiled brush; we get a sense of Dracula leading an endlessly lonely life. And Mina says a few pathetic words about him, but that's as much sympathy as he ever gets.

Anne Rice on the other hand makes her vampires into exiles who serve a new form of evil. To that degree, I think what Anne is doing is reaching for what we might call epic meaning. That we might have an excuse for all those deaths, she created a race of beings who are exiled, lonely, and committed to the creation of what she calls a 'new evil.'

Now I myself am not sympathetic to creatures whose entire destiny is to do evil. Milton understood where they belong—in Hell. To that degree, she is giving us a new fiction, which reflects the contemporary world. If we imagine that we are all of us (a) vampires and (b) in non-functional families—because those are the

Louis Jordan is more Rice than Stoker, even sharing a first name with *Interview*'s protagonist.

David J. Skal, author of Hollywood Gothic and The Monster Show.

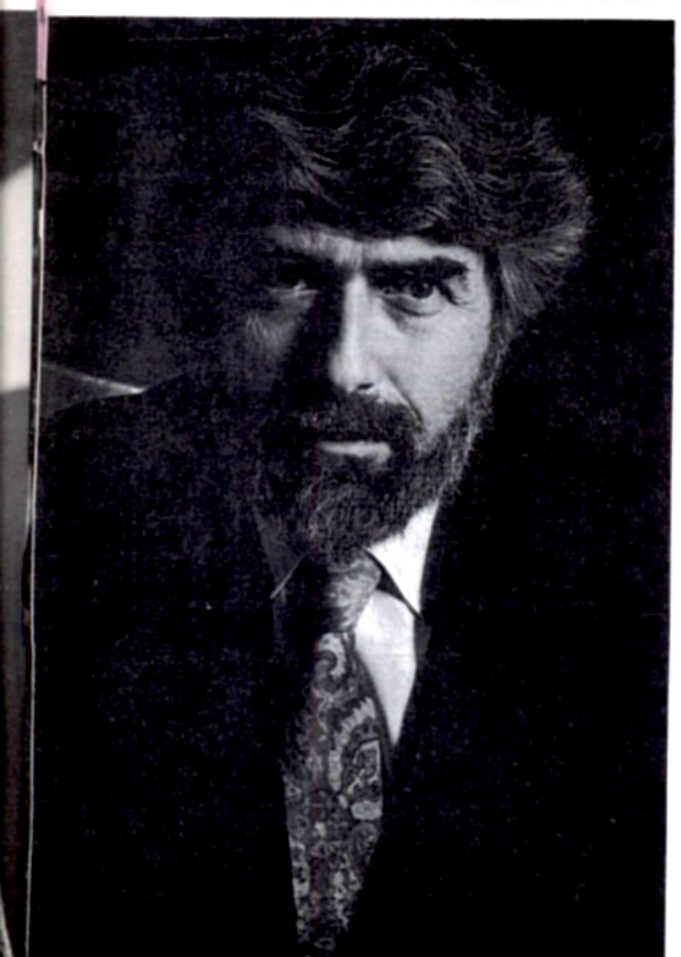
two elements that energize her work—then we begin to see that we have an allegory for our time.

DS: I think the vampire also represents the modern man's recognition and simultaneous revulsion at the idea of the basic biological interdependancies of living things. We feel that we live in this highly technical, sanitized machine age, at least those of us fortunate enough to live in industrialized Western cultures. There is this visceral area of physical connectedness, the way all living things do finally feed upon one another or are dependent on the energies of other beings to live, and it's a shock to the modern mind, which we tend to process as a horror effect.

LW: Wouldn't you say that's true not just of vampires but of all monsters? When we read monster tales, we're scared back into our bodies, and the hormones flow. This becomes a pleasure, since we do live in what you properly call a sanitized world—there is no saber tooth tiger in the living room!

DS: I think you're absolutely right. There's a basic physical kick of adrenaline, and the hair rises up. Getting back to Anne Rice, it's very important that her prose is very much against the grain of fashionable literary style of the last several decades, which has tended toward an antiseptic minimalism. She writes sensuously.

Leonard Wolf, author of *A Dream of Dracula* and *The Essential Dracula*.



Louis mourns his lost humanity, visiting his family burial plot. "This is the post-existential alien race," says Wolf.

It's ripe; it's decadent. And it's fun! It's a pleasure we're not given all that often in mainstream literary fiction. This also probably accounts for some of the problems she's had with mainstream critics who dislike her prose style.

LW: I think mainstream critics generally are put off by people who sell in the millions.

DS: That's right. I think the most remarkable thing she has done, though, is...the vampire metaphor has always been very elastic, but she has found a way to make the vampire stand for just about anything. You can read all kinds of valid interpretations into her vampire world.

LW: Don't you think, David, it has to do with—I think you started to say this, and I'm sorry if I cut you off—the meaning of the blood exchange. It's the most intimate way that people can not just touch each other but become each other. The blood exchange is much different even from violation. You suggested that it's a form of rape, and indeed it is, but it is absolutely the most ultimate form of rape because it's a mutual rape. When the blood is mixed...one of the mysteries of *Dracula* is 'Who is who at the end of the novel?' because so many of them have each other's blood. All the transfusions have mixed up everybody, and the person who has almost everybody in him is Dracula himself. What I'm suggesting is that what Anne has working for her is the extraordinary intimacy that the blood exchange implies. That gives her a chance to get at relationships in a more refined way than—forgive me for the comparison—a Henry James novel wherein people only touch each other with words. We might argue that that's a higher form of intercourse, intellectually speaking, but the metaphor of the blood exchange says, 'We not only touch each other; we become each other.'

DS: Blood of course is one of the ultimate in human symbols. There are very few substances that have such an ancient and

Rice was a fan of director Neil Jordan's previous work; in fact, in *The Tale of the Body Thief*, Louis watches a videotape of THE COMPANY OF WOLVES.

mythological charge, going far beyond the idea of vampires. Blood can stand for almost anything in the human psyche or human relationships, and has at one time or another. In the modern age, especially in the last ten years or so, our feelings about blood and blood contact have been very much connected to the AIDS epidemic. The vampire shifts from generation to generation. It takes on new shades of meaning and metaphorical significance. In the age of AIDS, it is representing both our fear of this blood plague and our fantasy about transcending it—the fear of death and the possibility of surviving death. So we're processing this death anxiety in a rather complex way. It is no accident that vampires have undergone this tremendous pop culture resurgence in a time that parallels the AIDS epidemic exactly.

LW: While I myself acknowledge you're entirely right in what you've said so far, I miss—I think I'm older than both of you—the link between the vampire and Satan, the cleavage between what we might call Christian salvation and Christian damnation. There is, if I may say so, a kind of secularization, which is in keeping with where we really are in this century. At the same time, I rather think it's a pity that we cannot still have our fiction making use of the wafer, the cross and all the machinery that a believing person could make use of to defend himself against that evil.

DS: It's interesting that in the 20th Century the vampire, especially Dracula, has almost completely taken over, at least in iconography and popular culture, the image of the Devil. We don't really see the horns, tail and pitchfork anymore; we see the cape and the fangs. It serves a lot of the same cultural purposes and pops up in a lot of the same places that the old Scratch used to. At the same time, the vampire is also a Christ-like symbol. Dracula, Frankenstein, and some of these other monsters are resurrection figures. They die,

continued on page 35

BEYOND Dracula

VAMPIRE GLAMOUR (AND

Makeup for the undead by Michele Burke,

By Steve Biodrowski

The vampire certainly is the most attractive and alluring of movie monsters, which sets him apart from his ugly and bestial brethren, such as Frankenstein's Monster, the Wolfman, and the Mummy. "No one has created another type of glorious or amazing horror character," makeup artist Michele Burke(QUEST FOR FIRE) points out. "Every time you think of a horror character's appearance, you make it look disgusting and revolting, and certainly no one would try to kiss them. Whereas vampires are very appealing and of course terribly attractive. Actually, I wouldn't mind creating another character like that within the horror, science-fiction, fantasy mode."

It makes perfect sense that the glamorous aspects of the characters in BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA and INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE would appeal to the two-time Oscar-winner, who started in the field of glamour makeup as a demonstrator for Revlon before moving into prosthetics. "I thought you had to learn all this stuff systematically if you wanted to say you were a true makeup artist. Only after I came further down the road in my career did I realize that some people only do fashion makeup; some people only do straight makeup; and some people only do effects. But actually it served me very well,

Lestat or Lost Boy? After Cruise's initial makeup test, a source at Warners confided, "I don't know if he can act the part, but he can look the part."

because now I can do everything."

Working on the two vampire epics was a perfect fusion of the different disciplines, incorporating both beauty and horror. "The two of those really were," she allows, "And what I've noticed is a lot of people have confirmed that with me. If you do very good fashion and print work, that base that you've learned stands by you for the prosthetic work, because it is such detailed knowledge of colors and mixing, getting everything to be absolutely perfect under a microscope. Some people that start the other way around, as lab guys, have a lot of problems doing applications and beauty."

Burke was happy to get the assignment doing the "straight" makeup on DRACULA because "because I was getting pigeon-holed into specialty prosthetic work. It transpired that Greg Cannom and Matthew Mungle were handling all that, and they gave me the job of designing everything else. It was nice to show a broad spectrum of work, creating a look for each character. And it was a great opportunity to work with Francis [Coppola] and the cast, especially with Gary [Oldman]."

The most challenging part of that first foray into vampire territory was turning Oldman into a new version of the Count. "The idea of him wearing a widow's peak, fangs, and a cloak was absolutely off the

GORE)

Stan Winston.

boards; he was not to look like all the other Draculas. I gave Dracula his look in 1462 and when he's a young man. The only thing I did for the old age was design the hair. I knew Greg was doing the makeup, but Eiko [Esioka] insisted I do all the hair, and I thought, 'Oh no, he's not going to like that at all.' When I called him up and said I had a concept that Francis had accepted, there was a kind of chilly 'Oh?' on the other end of the line. I couldn't do anything about the situation, but in the end I think he liked it. Everyone named it the 'Micky Mouse' look."

Part of the challenge was dealing with a leading man who supplied plenty of acting talent but not much in the way of traditional good looks. "They cast Gary Oldman and said to me, 'We know he's not gorgeous, but he's a great actor, and when he's a young Dracula we want him to be gorgeous.' My only way of dealing with that was to go from a female point of view, in the sense that a lot of men aren't really stunning, but they have something amazing, fascinating, and mysterious within them that transcends everything.

"So Francis said, 'He's an

Michelle Burke's unused makeup concept for the Vampire Brides in Coppola's DRACULA, was to blend them in, chameleon-like, with tapestries on the wall. Rather than simply recreate her original design, she evolved it into the lightning bolt look for us.

Michele Burke's two vampire protagonists: Gary Oldman as Dracula (above) and Brad Pitt as Louis (inset). "I was trying to outdo what I had done on DRACULA."

Eastern Byzantine prince. He should be handsome and androgynous but also grotesque.' The main thing was we wanted him to look like Mina could be attracted to him. The only way to go was a very regal look, a Renaissance look. Gary's got a tiny face and an amazing hairline—he'll never go bald. So my thought—and he agreed—was to shave his hairline back by two or three inches, to give him the sort of regal hairline that you see in old paintings of kings. Even though Gary has a certain look, he transcends it with his acting, and I think the look we gave him stands up with previous Draculas."

The only other vampires in the film were Dracula's various brides: the three anonymous sirens in the castle and Lucy Westenra, who is transformed during the course of the film. Their makeup was basically grey with glue-grey shading for a pale alabaster skin. "Beauty was a big part of it," says Burke. "I was inspired by a Helmut Newton photograph. It's funny: He came in to do a shoot, saw the photograph, and said, 'Oh, I see you're a fan of mine.'"

Burke added some additional details to the brides in the castle, trying to imply a back story for the the characters. "One was to look like Medusa, and the other two were to look like princesses donated to Dracula by conquered lands as tribute. Francis loved that idea." Unfortunately, the distinctive hair styles and jewelry, meant to imply different lands of origin, don't deliver their message during the minimal screen time.

Another interesting but abandoned idea was using body paints to create a chameleon-like camouflage. "The idea was you'd see them suddenly appear by stepping out of the curtains. We also wanted them in the ramparts when Keanu is escaping; they were supposed to look like part of the wall. I hate to say it, but the day we were testing, there were other people on the set, including one particularly well-known designer, who announced that these girls weren't sexy-looking. With a sweep of his hand, Francis agreed and blotted out all this work. Eiko and I felt very strongly that it was an amazing look, and the actresses agreed, but all the men just wanted to see the flesh—the paint was in the way. For us, it was an arty thing, and it was only for one split-second: they emerge, and then you cut to them appearing normal. When Francis decided he wanted the flesh look, Eiko and I decided they'd have long hair—all the brides have hair extensions—and be totally naked underneath those chiffon dresses."

"...we were nonpareils of our species, a silk- and velvet-clad trio of deadly hunters...aristocratically aloof, unfailingly elegant, and invariably merciless."

Despite this one minor disappointment, Burke found the experience to be a gratifying and instructive one that helped prepare her for the challenge of INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE, which contains a

The auburn-haired Armand of the book has been transformed into a dark, Latin character to accommodate the casting of Antonio Banderas.

larger cast of undead characters, each with his or her own distinctive look. And, she claims, even though there is a certain similarity of subject matter, there was no shortage of ideas when tackling vampires a second time around. "In fact there's so many ideas that most of the time I feel that we always have to pull back, because you're afraid to be sticking out. I think I enjoyed this vampire film as well as doing DRACULA because they were so different. I was trying to outdo what I had already done, but in a whole other way. I think DRACULA was more like opera, definitely fantasy. On INTERVIEW, we walked the line: on one level it was definitely unreal; on another it was definitely reality, so you felt you were in New Orleans in 1790. In DRACULA we took from the period but stylized it; in INTERVIEW we stuck more with the period."

Being already familiar with the book, Burke was eager to work on the film. "A friend of mine had been raving about it for a long time, so I said I would read it, and I couldn't put it down. When I heard Neil Jordan was making it, I sent him my resume. Having done DRACULA was a great introduction."

On INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE, Stan Winston's studio designed the elaborate makeup and effects, which were executed on set by Burke." Every character had a basic template, based on our concept of what a vampire would look like by virtue of our drawings of Tom and Brad," explains Winston, himself a winner of numerous Academy Awards. "Much of the final defining of the other characters was finalized by Michele Burke and her makeup artists, based on the look we had created, so there was a consistency."

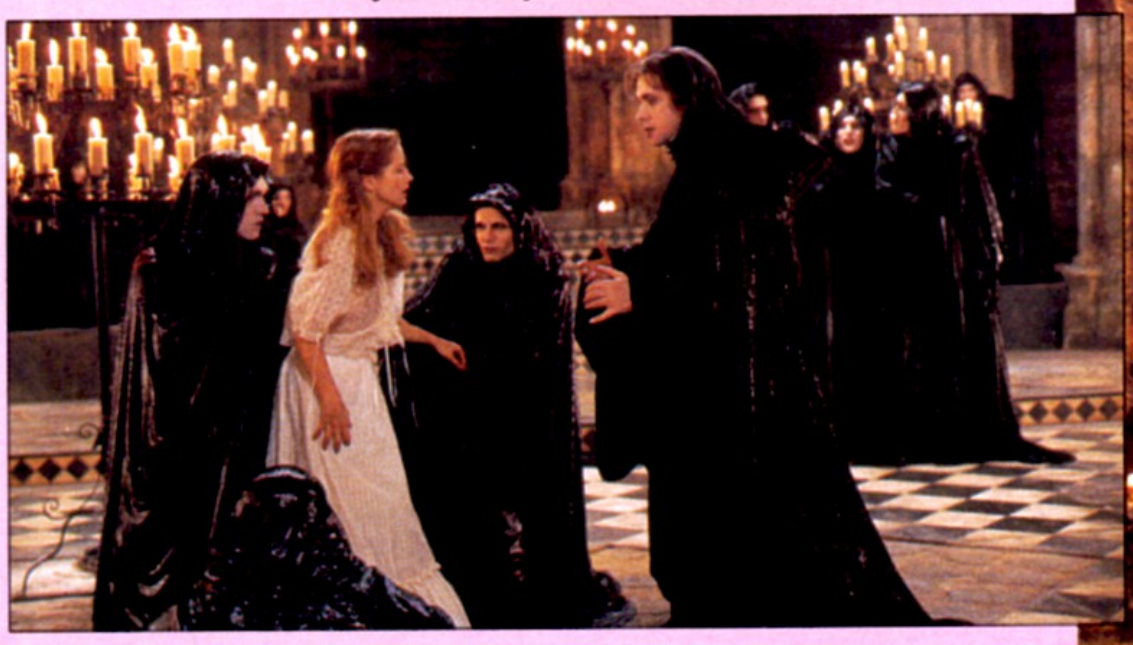
"The basic idea was they would all have the eyes, the fangs, and the veins; then each character evolved," adds Burke. "Neil had one particular idea of what Armand should look like, with that cheruby, to-the-shoulders, wavy hair, but I felt we'd done too much of that. Antonio and I decided he should look completely different. We put this long wig on him. When we came on the set, there was absolute silence; everyone just stared. But Neil spoke to him for awhile, and that's the look we went with. Since he was a character who was born in that time and was out of step with everything contemporary (in a later book it talks about how he needs Louis or the interviewer to anchor himself in the present), I thought he should be a throwback to an earlier time."

Winston's design, of course,

Madeleine (note the distinctive bite) becomes the new companion of Claudia (below) when it becomes apparent that her relationship with Louis is over.

was very concerned with making these creatures seem preternaturally attractive, quite a challenge when dealing with pale-skinned, fanged monsters. "That was where the subtlety came in to this concept," he explains. "Although there's a translucent quality to the skin of these vampires, there's also an intensity—this is where the contact lenses help a lot. So much of a char-

The look-alike denizens of the Theatres des Vampyres cause Louis to observe, "They had made of immortality a conformists' club." The number of extras (right) presented a challenge to the makeup crew. Their on-stage appearance (below) was exaggerated, because the vampires want their audience to think they are merely human actors wearing makeup.



After being stabbed by Claudia ("I'll put you in your grave, father") Lestat returns as an emaciated corpse, prosthetics applied by Burke. By the film's conclusion he is but a tired shell of his former self.

acter's strength comes out of the glint in the eye and the sexiness of a smile. If you take those two aspects, that circumvents a lot of the fact that they have pale skin. Also, the teeth are beautiful, not just two long fangs that are scary. They are not so obvious, because they're not something that supernaturally grows when it's time to bite; they're there all the time, when they're talking or otherwise. By creating more than two fangs, there was a nice gradation to the teeth, which allowed for them to look normal in the mouth."

Working within this design still left plenty of room to add additional details during the execution. "It's one thing to say a character has blonde hair and fangs," says Burke, who applied Cruise's various guises as Lestat. "But there was a lot of fine-tuning, especially with Tom's makeup, which had a lot of details. It's so subtle you wonder what has been done. To turn him from a very dark-brown haired person with hazel eyes into a blue-eyed blonde took a lot of considerate thought, because he has a kind of olive skin. With that tone, you can't have him just a blonde; it had to be a blonde that worked with that skin. On top of that we had to make him look pale; that had to work with the hair color."

Burke found inspiration for many of these details not only in *Interview With The Vampire* but also in the subsequent books. "Of course, I read all that she wrote. Sometimes just one little detail could inspire you or give you the idea you want to express, but to me a character is details. It's tiny details all added from the ground up that totals and equals a

Destruction of Vampires: Unlike DRACULA (left), there is no Van Helsing character in INTERVIEW, so an undead's greatest enemy is his own kind. Right: Madeleine and Claudia, left by the Parisian vampires in a shaft, are destroyed by the rising sun. Below left and center: Stan Winston and Neil Jordan set up a decapitation effect for Louis's revenge.

character. The descriptions were amazing, even in the other books. She goes on down the line and starts the other characters off, like Akasha in *The Queen of the Damned*. I'd love to do that! "

The vampires' translucent skin color reveals a subtle network of veins, which Burke realized with a relatively simple technique developed on her previous effort. "I guess I started this on DRACULA, because I had a lot of problems with Gary's skin. Oil- or water-based makeup never worked, so what I came up with was just a regular pancake, the most basic makeup in the world. On this film we did a similar idea. We started off doing all the veins with tattoo colors as an under-structure. Then we put the pancake over that, which worked beautifully, because that never rubbed off, whereas an oil-based makeup or a cream would have rubbed off the tattoo coloring. That was the secret to the makeup. Also, when they're in the Vampire Theatre on stage, their makeup is pumped up: the veins are accentuated, and the faces look whiter, because the audience thinks it's makeup."

Although the book describes vampires as gaining a more human appearance after feeding, the film did not pursue this approach. "We were going to get into that, but we decided it would look too silly," says Burke. "Mostly we left it to the acting. We did have moments when Tom would not have eaten for a time and he would look more gaunt or when he had been feasting like a glutton and I would flesh him out a little more. But it was so subtle you would have to be looking for it."

Besides glamour, the film will also feature its share of gore, including bite marks appropriate to the teeth of these particular vampires. On the days featuring the more extensive effects, members of Winston's studio were on set to augment Burke's makeup crew. "We do have blood in this," Winston acknowledges. "Let's not say gratuitous, but it is a vampire movie. You can't very well have people dying and have it medicinal. We had many, many effects throughout the film, but they're not big monster effects. There are a number of subtle but unsettling things that happen in this movie."

INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE

The vampire was utterly white and smooth, as if sculpted from bleached bone, his face as seemingly inanimate as a statue, except for two brilliant green eyes like flames in a skull.

Winston's concept for the vampire's teeth was that a gradation of sharpness would prevent the eyeteeth from standing out like traditional fangs.

Many of the unsettling things involve extensive prosthetic makeups on Cruise for the various stages of Lestat's appearance, including a skeletal visage after Claudia has tried to kill him and a decrepit look near the end, when he hasn't been well for many years. "There's also an extensive effect when Claudia actually kills him," Winston proudly reveals. "That particular effect is one of, if not *the* most extensive effect ever created in this studio. It's a combination of live-action animatronics and c.g. effects from Digital domain, which I own with Jim Cameron and Scott Ross, to create a transformation that is unlike any we have ever seen, by virtue of the fact that it is *invisible*. We've seen people shrivel from life to corpse, using film effects, but in this particular effect I defy any viewer, any audience, any effects person to see what is happening. By the time the shot is finished, which takes fifteen seconds, he is no longer Tom Cruise as Lestat; he is an Auschwitz victim."

Some of the other graphic effects are elaborations of what was in the book, such as the burning of the Theatres des Vampyres, during which Louis decapitates Santiago (Stephen Rea). "He's not alone in the movie," says Winston. "We juiced it up a little bit, because film is a visual medium—you have to see things interesting and exciting. The destruction of the Theatres of the Vampires is quite extensive visually. It's a really special scene, including what happens to Santiago," who is now cut in two. "Yet even so, INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE should not be viewed by the audience as a makeup effects extravaganza. This movie is a character study, and our work should not get in the way of that."

Apparently, the effects did get in the way of the character study, at least according to audience test screenings, which precipitated some trimming. "The movie is quite brutal, and we had to adjust a couple of scenes that were too brutal for the audience," admits Geffen. "We had to take out some of the blood." □

and they're reborn. In a way, they provide some people with a greater kind of metaphysical or quasi-religious charge than they're getting from traditional religion.

LW: You know, David, I wrote an essay in the *New York Times* some years ago called 'Horror Movies: The Underground Cathedrals of America.' I made the point that young people living in a secular society, who have almost no access to religious symbolism, still get it in scary movies, which make use of the priest, the crucifix and the invocations that keep Satan away and/or produce him. That, I may say, I find a rather nice aspect of horror literature, that it does provide people with their last hold in an otherwise secular age.

DS: In my book *The Monster Show,* I did a chapter in which I talked about the very similar way that monster figures, Dracula and Frankenstein in particular, fill the void in our culture for meaningful initiation rights. Adolescent boys especially gravitate toward these images of vampires and the walking dead to do what societies have been doing with terrifying masked figures in coming-of-age rituals from time immemorial. These things are missing formally in our culture, but kids seem to know where to get them.

LW: I would like to ask David something: Horror literature and particularly horror film in America appeal primarily to young people and especially to adolescents. How do you think the Anne Rice stories strike adolescents?

DS: I don't know what the breakdown is of her audience or how that could even really be determined. I know from kids I've talked to—I give lectures at high schools and colleges—that she's very big on college campuses, and these kids started reading her when they were much younger.

LW: I had in mind I WAS A TEENAGE WEREWOLF. That whole series of films was

embraced by teenagers in the '50s because they let youngsters know there were other people aware that becoming an adolescent meant suddenly growing hair, having a different voice and lusting for things you never even knew about. All this made the monster an extraordinarily recognizable image. My experience of Anne Rice novels does not make me think that they can create that sense of recognition.

IM: Not exactly, but a lot of teenagers feel like alienated outsiders, and Rice's vampires appeal to that mind set.

DS: The 20th century is the Age of Alienation on so many levels. Part of the genius of Anne Rice's vampire metaphor is that it seems to speak to almost anyone who feels alienated or against the grain or not properly...what's the word?

LW: Mainstream.

DS: Yes, anyone out of the mainstream can find a wonderful seductive kind of identification with Anne Rice's vampires, and that's why she is the best-selling vampire writer of all time.

LW: Well, she imbues them with erotic power. Mostly they have an extraordinary amount of wealth, as they would—they've been around a long time and have invested their money well. You know, I grew up on the magazines of the '30s and '40s, and it's interesting to me that we now have a movie called THE SHADOW, which cannibalizes the mythology of those magazines. Always the do-good guy had enormous amounts of money and power. They were in an important sense fascist figures: dynamic, organized, rich enough to do whatever they wanted, and what they wanted to do was beat up bad guys. Well, what Anne has done is reversed that image: she has dynamic rich people and has also told us, 'Look how much fun they have. At the same time they're just like you and me: they're terribly lonely; they're exiled; they're

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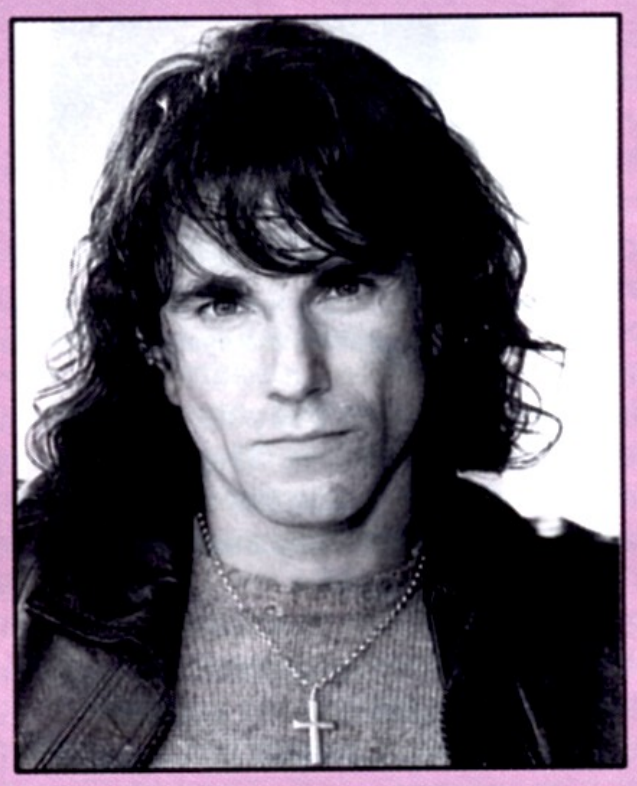
BEYOND Dracula

BONFIRE OF THE VAMPIRES

Do Tom Cruise's fans really want to see him suck on Brad Pitt's neck?

By Steve Biodrowski

After trashing the casting of Tom Cruise for months, Anne Rice, in a surprise turnabout, has announced, via paid advertisements, that she loves the finished INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE, including the star's performance. So, is the Cruise casting controversy over? Not quite yet, because audiences, not authors, buy tickets, and the film's trailer, with the actor declaiming his lines as if in the courtroom scene of A FEW GOOD MEN, has caused snickers in those who still would prefer Daniel Day Lewis as Lestat. Perhaps significantly, the ads don't apologize for initially opposing Cruise, instead thanking readers for expressing their opinions to the studio, as if this were a helpful part of the filmmaking process.

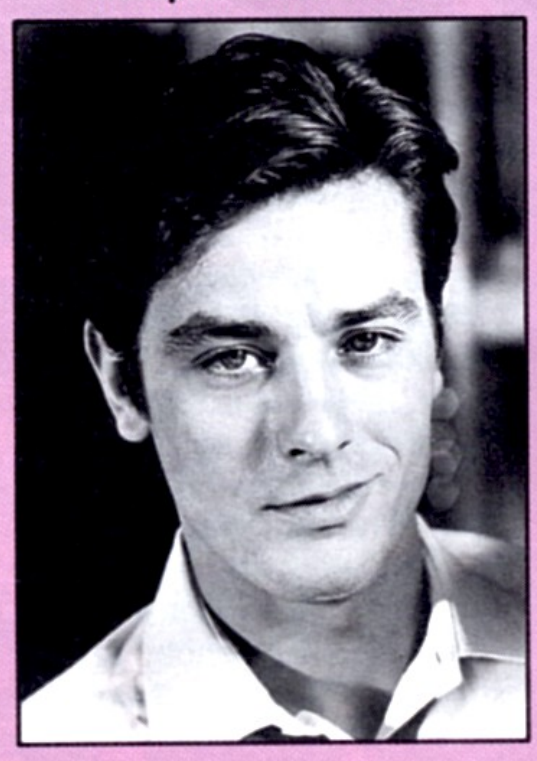


Daniel Day Lewis, who had played Dracula on stage, turned down the role of Lestat.

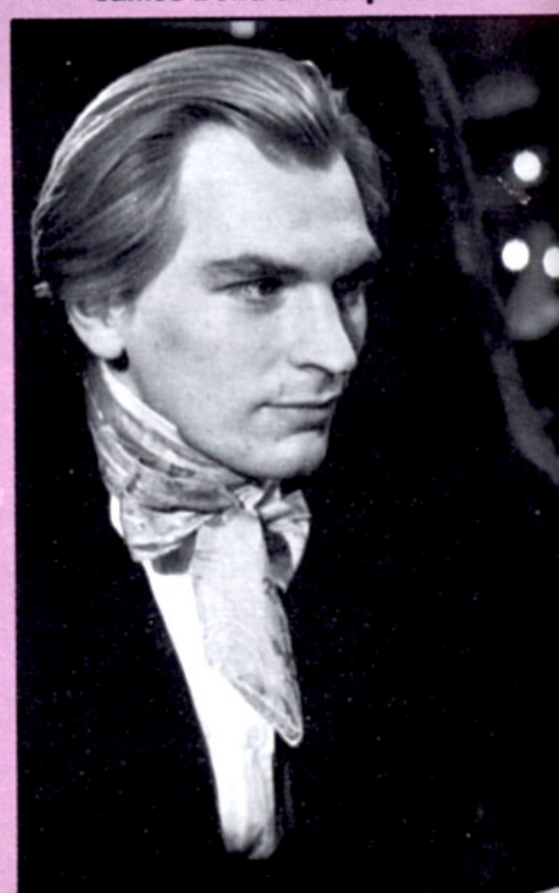
That's not the way the filmmakers see it, of course. Of the decision that ignited the controversy, David Geffen says, "With the exception of Tom Cruise, we got all of the people we originally wanted. I think there was resistance from Daniel Day Lewis only because he's the kind of actor who becomes the part. It was a very long shooting schedule, and he did not want to play a vampire—or *be* a vampire, I should say—for that period of time. When Lewis decided he didn't want to do it, we went to our second choice. Believe it or not, long before, it was Anne Rice's idea—although, unfortunately, she doesn't remember—so, we went after Cruise, and he is absolutely spectacular in the movie."

Typical for Hollywood, no one appreciates a Devil's Advocate, no matter how badly one is needed (just read *The Devil's Candy* for confirmation). Despite admitting, "I think that all the criticism caused [Cruise] to rise to the occasion," Geffen saw Rice's objection to the casting not as a legitimate difference of opinion but as an act of betrayal. "I thought it was very unprofessional," he said, before the author had seen the film and retracted her earlier criticism. "To talk about a film without having seen it is idiotic. But it doesn't make a difference," he added, predicting accurately, "When she sees the

Alain Delon was Rice's initial choice for Louis, back when the book was first optioned in the 1970s.



Julian Sands would have been good as Lestat, the self-proclaimed "James Bond of vampires."



film, I think she'll be thrilled."

"It's a shame Anne Rice was such a detriment to this movie," concurs Stan Winston. "I say that with all candor. Fortunately, the filmmakers were bigger fans of Anne Rice than she was of us; unfortunately, she doesn't deserve it. And if she doesn't want her book touched, if she wants it done her way, tell her not to take any money and don't sell another book! Let's not be greedy."

Unstated in these accusations of biting the hand that feeds is the fact that Rice's contract for the film rights was with Julia Phillips, not Geffen. (After bad-mouthing him in *You'll Never Eat Lunch in This Town Again*, Phillips was fired by Geffen, who inherited the project.) This spin-doctoring by omission has become *de rigeur* for interviews about the film, and the subject of casting is obviously a touchy one. For example, witness the following dialogue with Geffen, which resulted from an innocent question regarding makeup for an actor who does not physically resemble his character:

"In fact, he does physically resemble the character."

"How so?"

"How not?"

"Well, he's not tall."

After a long pause: "I hate to tell you that Alan Ladd played characters, you know—this is not unusual in movies."

"And he's not blonde."

"Well, most people are not the hair color that they have in movies. It's not even a consideration. You think that only a blonde can play a blonde?"

"Not necessarily. I'm just wondering about any additional difficulties involved."

"Yes, it's harder for the actor, if you need to dye his hair or whatever, but for Tom, who's a consummate actor, it's par for the course."

Winston, whose studio designed the transformation of Pitt and Cruise into Louis and Lestat, also takes this question as an opportunity to launch into the party line: "I find it a little disconcerting that there was so much public concern based on the fact—and most of all I point this at Anne Rice—that the people cast did not look in their every day lives like the characters in the book. Any part should be cast primarily for performance, and I'm going to do whatever I can to make that person look as close to the part as possible. That's where hiring Stan Winston or someone else who does that job comes into the equation. It's a difficult one, but even if the actor doesn't look exactly like in the book, you allow an actor to act. Tom Cruise is very strong actor who has been acclaimed for his stretches, and I think he deserves the right to play the part. If in the final analysis, people don't like my work or don't like Tom, they can boo, but for God's sake don't do it before a person has had a chance to try. Let all the naysayers get involved in the film business, or put a zip on it!"

This attitude might be sensible coming from an avante garde artist who refuses to compromise his work to please a bigger audience. But it's absolutely strange coming from Hollywood, a town that routinely tests markets films and asks potential audiences, in effect, "How can we change this to make you like it more?" In fact, as these interviews are being conducted, the film is undergoing just such test screenings and revisions.

Another bit of spin-doctoring is the contention that objections to Cruise are based solely on his hair color, as if a wonderfully versatile actor has been unfairly maligned because he is not blonde. But, as David Geffen astutely points out, "Neither is Daniel Day-Lewis," and no one objected to him. The real objection to Cruise is neither the color of his hair nor an alleged lack of ability. Rice actually thinks he could have been good as Louis but that he was miscast as Lestat because his *voice* is wrong.

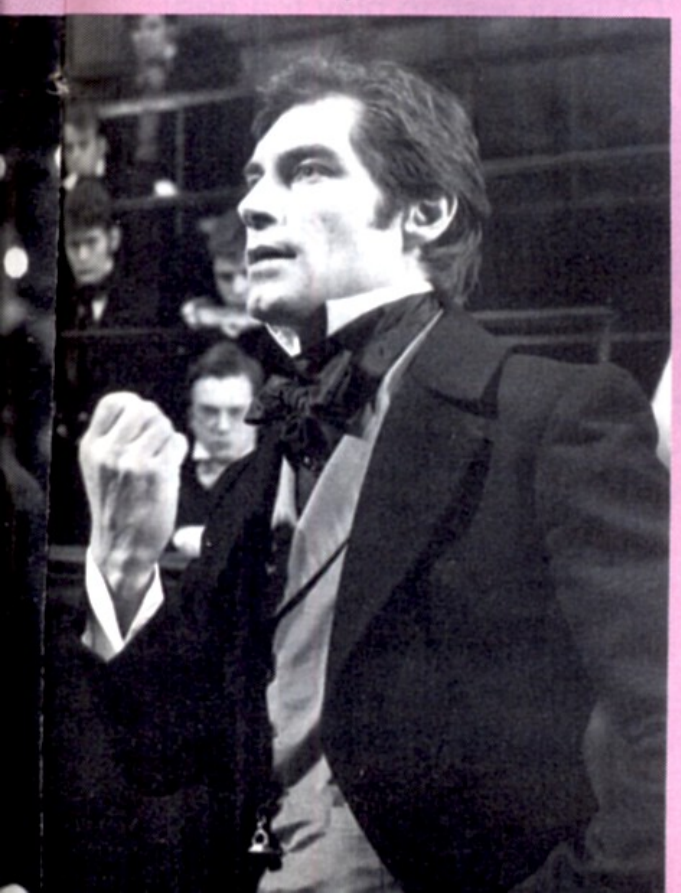
With current interviews emphasizing Cruise's "considerable talent" (per Jordan), one would get the impression that his even more considerable box office clout never figured into the casting decision. So it is important to recall the director's admission in the March *Esquire* that "a very high-profile choice" was necessary for the big-budget production.

Studios think stars will sell tickets to viewers who wouldn't bother to buy the book, but this kind of thinking gave us the miscasting of Tom Hanks and Bruce Willis, whom audiences refused to accept in BONFIRE OF THE VANITIES, despite their appeal and ability. A star, as opposed to a less well-known actor, brings not only talent but an established persona to each role. Whether or not Cruise can act the part, the question is: "Will his audience accept him, or will there be a mass exodus when he violates his image by sleeping in a coffin face-to-face with Brad Pitt?"

Much of the worry about the faithfulness of the script derives from fears that rewrites would accommodate Cruise's star persona by toning down just such homoerotic undertones while also beefing up his part. According to Geffen, "no considerations" were given. "The screenplay was written, and Tom understood that his character disappears in the middle and does not come back until the end." The producer is not worried that the star's minimal screen time will disappoint fans. "The danger in

Queen of the Damned **expresses Rice's preference for Rutger Hauer in a reference to BLADE RUNNER: "'That's your friend, Lestat, there,' Armand whispered once to Daniel. 'Lestat would have the...guts...to do that!'"**

Ironically, Sand's DOCTOR AND THE DEVILS co-star, Timothy Dalton, was another early Rice choice for Louis.



Armand, Lestat, and Louis lounging at Maharet's Sonoma compound in *Queen of the Damned*? No, it's Henry Thomas, Brad Pitt, and Aidan Quinn in LEGENDS OF THE FALL. But what interesting casting it would have been.

Rock stars had long been considered for INTERVIEW, including Sting (right, with Jennifer Beals in THE BRIDE), who went on to write a song inspired by the Chronicles. Though something about the androgyny of rock imagery suited Rice's vampires, an explicit connection wasn't made until Lestat's concert in the sequel: "I based the voice on Jim Morrison and the music on 'L.A. Woman,'" says Rice in *The Vampire Companion*. Curiously, the Dionysian image presented by the late singer seems to have end-less appeal for the genre. Jason Patric in THE LOST BOYS (below) strongly resembles Morrison, and Nancy Collins in her novel *Sunglasses after Dark* includes an episode with a vampire impersonating the "Lizard King.' Val Kilmer (above as Morrison in THE DOORS, with Kathleen Quinlan) would have made an interesting Lestat; ironically, he was chosen to replace another miscast actor, Michael Keaton, as Batman.

making a movie is 'Are you going to have expectations that are not met?' This movie will meet anyone's expectations."

As for the controversial gender aspects, Jordan asks, "Why would people think I'd take the homo-eroticism out of this? It's far less up front and pertinent than in THE CRYING GAME. What's so great about this movie is the vampires don't have sex—the blood-sucking act itself is their orgasm. Therefore, every possible facet of life becomes an erotic possibility. If you eliminate the act of two people mating, you can put eroticism into everything. That, more than anything, is the visual metaphor of the movie."

All of this would be a tempest in a teapot if only INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE were at stake; after all, Lestat is a supporting character, arguably no more important than Armand. But in later Vampire Chronicles, Lestat presents himself as a charming anti-hero when he tells his side of the story. This mischievous ne'er-do-well persona is much more clearly in line with Cruise than the original characterization. "He's more venal in the first book and less venal in additional books," says Geffen. "In this, we're doing it as it was written. We did not allow ourselves to be influenced by the later books."

Likewise, Jordan and producer Stephen Woolly insist in the December *Cinefantastique* that it was Rice herself who confused Lestat with his later incarnations. (After a tortured "David and Goliath" metaphor—casting the $60-million production as the little guy!—Woolly insists readers are confused about Lestat because they know him only from the later "best-sellers," not *Interview,* which was only a "cult book." This must be quite a surprise to Ballantine, who promoted the paperback onto the best seller list.) Yet revisions have been made to set up sequels, with Lestat reappearing in present day San Francisco. In effect, his character arc has been fit to the standard Cruise mold: he starts out arrogant; then his natural decency emerges. Needless to say, plans are afoot to adapt the later books, which have already been purchased. "We're going to do THE VAMPIRE LESTAT next," says Geffen, adding that though not signed for sequels Cruise and Jordan *are* interested. "I think it's likely they'll do it probably in the next two years."

The Who once said they became a successful rock group because they "learned to lead by following." That is, they were not setting standards for fans to follow like mindless sheep; they were expressing things already felt by the audience. In the case of casting Cruise, fans had been expressing their irate views for three weeks before Rice publicly admitted sharing their feelings. She did not turn the public against the film, as much as its makers would like to think so. Rather, their own decision had alienated readers, and that can be quite frustrating to someone who has spent millions of dollars securing a property with a pre-sold audience.

Actually, there is at least one good thing to say about Cruise's wish to play the part: it is a very Lestat-type of decision. Just as the character eagerly embarks on each new adventure despite a chorus of disapproval, the actor took on something which many are telling him he cannot do. So, in the end, there would be a certain kind of artistic closure, of a dramatically satisfying finish, if he managed to prove the naysayers wrong and triumph. It's the kind of thing Lestat himself would do. □

Quotes from Neil Jordan provided by Alan Jones.

BEYOND Dracula

IN DEFENSE OF CRUISE

Casting against type has worked before.

By Anthony P. Montesano

When it works (as in BATMAN), casting against type is praised as a gutsy decision which led to a film's success. When it doesn't work (ISHTAR) it becomes the target of every critic's negative review.

The uproar over the casting of Tom Cruise as the Vampire Lestat came as a surprise, however. Author Anne Rice was quite vocal about her disappointment. Her short list for the role of her manipulative, insidious Lestat included Jeremy Irons, John Malkovich, Peter Weller, and Brad Pitt (who will end up playing the vampire Louis instead). Her reasoning in the press for her choices seem to revolve alternately around her obsessions over hip movements (Rice liked the way Pitt moved his hips in THELMA & LOUISE) and the sound of an actor's voice. (Before beginning to defend Rice too vehemently, one should also consider that the author was at one point fully willing to consider *Angelica Houston* in the role of Lestat with none other than *Cher* playing Louis.)

Anyone who has read Rice's book should agree that, by and large, her "logical" choices for the role of Lestat are blatant cases of typecasting. Anne Rice should at least see Cruise's turn as Lestat before trashing the choice any further.

A similar outcry greeted the casting of Michael Keaton in BATMAN. On Broadway, Jonathan Pryce faced a mob outraged that he, rather than an Asian actor, was cast to play a Eurasian pimp in MISS SAIGON. What nonsense. That why it's called *acting,* folks.

Obviously there are clear cases of miscasting. (BONFIRE OF THE VANITIES is strewn with examples.) But when an actor with obvious talent is cast in a part not originally intended for him, the hook he or she brings to the role can be pure magic. (Boris Karloff's mute Frankenstein Monster is not quite Mary Shelley's well-spoken creature who debates with his creator, but that film's persona is now part of American pop culture.)

And so it was for Keaton and Pryce. They both brought to their respective roles a depth and insight that would have been missing had the part simply been typecast.

Which brings us back to Tom Cruise as the Vampire Lestat. Anyone who has seen Cruise in Martin Scorsese's THE COLOR OF MONEY, opposite Paul Newman, or in Barry Levinson's RAIN MAN, opposite Dustin Hoffman, can see the wisdom in casting Cruise as Lestat based on his acting ability alone. In both films, Cruise served the right balance of energy and restraint that allowed his older, more seasoned co-stars to shine, while not being overshadowed by them. Cruise then proved in his Oscar-nominated performance in Oliver Stone's BORN ON THE FOURTH OF JULY that he could carry a serious film on his own shoulder's flying solo.

More importantly though are Cruise's turns in a trio of films—RISKY BUSINESS, COCKTAIL, and TOP GUN—which do not stand high as films on their own, but collectively offer the second reason why Cruise can handle the role. All three display the ease with which Cruise can turn a phrase, arch his eyebrow, and flash his trademark wicked smile. On their own, these abilities might not seem like much, but consider again Keaton in the role of Batman. Every part he played prior to that film worked to his advantage as he climbed into the bat suit: the audience was kept completely off-guard. After all, wasn't this the manic actor of NIGHT SHIFT and BEETLEJUICE? The audience knew Keaton could *explode* at any minute. And it was just that 'lack of balance' that kept us glued to his brooding Bruce Wayne/Batman—*when would he explode*?

Likewise, Cruise brings to the role of Lestat the image he has cemented in *his* previous films. That image will work to his advantage. This time, however, when he flashes that wicked trademark smile, we'll see his fangs as well. □

Above: Against the author's wishes, Tom Cruise landed the role of Lestat, who emerges as the anti-hero in subsequent Chronicles. Right: David Peel as Baron Meinster in Hammer's BRIDES OF DRACULA (1960), the obvious though unacknowledged inspiration for Rice's blond vampire.

BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA is "exactly what a Coppola movie should be: baroque, self-indulgent, brilliant, compelling, erotic," according to Wolf.

doomed to commit evil for the rest of their lives.' So we get the poignancy; we get the sensuality; we get the self-realization. It seems to me she's managed to put into her vampire metaphor all the things lovely and forbidden that we most desire.

IM: Also, I think there's a little of *Frankenstein,* in the sense that Rice's characters are both horrible and pitiful; they engage our sympathy even while recounting their terrible deeds.

LW: What we're saying also applies to the creature. He steals the book, absolutely. There's another book honored more in the breach than the reading. I can't help thinking that the early filmmakers almost unconsciously read Mary Shelley's mind, because over and over again I'm convinced that none of them bothered to read the book. I may say with very great pleasure that the film with Kenneth Branagh is going to correct that imbalance. Yet the Universal films at least intuited that the creature was a sympathetic figure. Karloff's eyes and hands never gave the sense he was in any way evil; he was the victim. And Victor is the absolute model of parental irresponsibility.

Fred Saberhagen's *The Dracula Tape* is one of many attempts to reinvent the Count as a maligned hero.

DS: The vampire and the artificial man are like yin and yang. They came into literary existence at the same time, at the haunted house party with Shelley, Byron, and Polidori, and they've been chasing each other ever since. When one is on stage, the other is always lurking in the wings. There's this wonderful cross fertilization between these two images. You don't really totally understand one until you understand both.

TALE OF THE BODY THIEF

I had been transformed into a dark god, thanks to suffering and triumph, and too much of the blood of our vampire elders. I had powers that left me baffled and even frightened.

LW: Well, one of them is the condensation of the anxiety of the abandoned orphan, and the other is the anxiety of the damned soul. We have for about 150 years lived in a long age of anxiety. So these two do indeed become icons of where we think we are at any given moment. What's fascinating is the way they continue to fit each generation, so that now you can say—and you're right, David—that the blood exchange represents AIDS anxiety. In an earlier period it stood for the anxiety of the soul in relation to Christ. The Frankenstein creature started being the anxiety of a child whose parents don't look after him, and it became a metaphor for unrestricted science. They'll probably be with us for as long as we have either technology or irresponsible parents.

DS: I absolutely agree. On one level they represent one of the basic splits in Western culture, between the scientific world view and a more mythical or supernatural—religious, if you want—world view. But it's not a simple antagonism, because each contains an element of the other.

IM: Getting back to sympathetic monsters, what do you think of turning Dracula into a hero or anti-hero?

LW: I find it very offensive.

DS: I do, too. I don't think it works. You eviscerate the ritual encounter with evil that is at the center of good horror fiction and movies. When you start trying to turn Dracula into a dreamboat, something has really gone out the window, and the audience has a peculiarly truncated experience.

LW: Well, you know, I complained long ago about those DRACULA movies in which Dracula, when strapped for human blood, would drink animal blood. That's a very offensive departure, because it absolutely vitiates the meaning of the symbol of blood as representing the soul. If you can drink animal blood, who needs a vampire? Why is Dracula the Son of the Dragon? Why does he represent Satan? If anyone can go out and buy himself a quart of sheep's blood, then there is no struggle between Good and Evil.

IM: Then you don't like Fred Saberhagen's *The Dracula Tape*, which retells Stoker's story from Dracula's viewpoint.

DS: I thought it was very funny.

LW: I was not amused. But I'm

Frank Langella gave us a dreamboat version of Dracula in 1979...

Unlike Bram Stoker, "Anne Rice is not repressed. She knows what she's doing. She's a finer writer."

drearier than you guys are. (laughs)

IM: When it parodied inconsistencies in Stoker's story, it was amusing, but if Count Dracula is not Satanic evil, then he's not very interesting. He's just this guy who drinks rats' blood.

DS: The thing I got from that particular book was that Dracula was stretching so far to reinterpret these things that you weren't quite convinced that he was innocent. He was like a political spin doctor. I found it clever.

IM: Stretching a point, Saber-

...here confronting Lawrence Olivier as Professor Van Helsing.

hagen co-wrote the novelization of BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA, which seemed to incorporate some of his ideas. What did you think of that film?

LW: You have to remember I was a paid consultant, so I'm not speaking out of an absolutely neutral position. I thought it was a magnificent Coppola film. I would not say it has to follow Stoker slavishly. As a Coppola film, it was exactly what it should be: baroque, self-indulgent, sensuous, brilliant, compelling, erotic. What more can you ask for two hours of entertainment?

DS: Well, I think he should have called it FRANCIS COPPOLA'S DRACULA. I thought it was remarkable that the film could be so obsessed with the surface elements of Stoker's plot and yet essentially throw away the main character. In that sense, I found it to be tremendously disappointing.

LW: Werner Herzog's NOSFERATU was similarly indulgent and similarly abandoned Stoker but produced one of the most visually beautiful pictures ever made and created the first representation of what it must be like to get infinitely old in the performance of Klaus Kinski. If you remember that endlessly aging face that cannot die...

DS: Yes, Kinski did some brilliant things.

LW: What's happened to me over the years is I don't much care whether it follows Stoker when I'm watching the movie. What we need to keep in mind is that the novel is not filmic except in individual scenes. There's too many characters, and there's a long middle section about as boring as the middle of *Frankenstein*.

DS: Well, nobody's going to do Stoker. All of the cultural associations of Dracula are so encrusted that nobody's ever really going to get back to it, and the best you can do is just consider DRACULA movies as a kind of work in progress.

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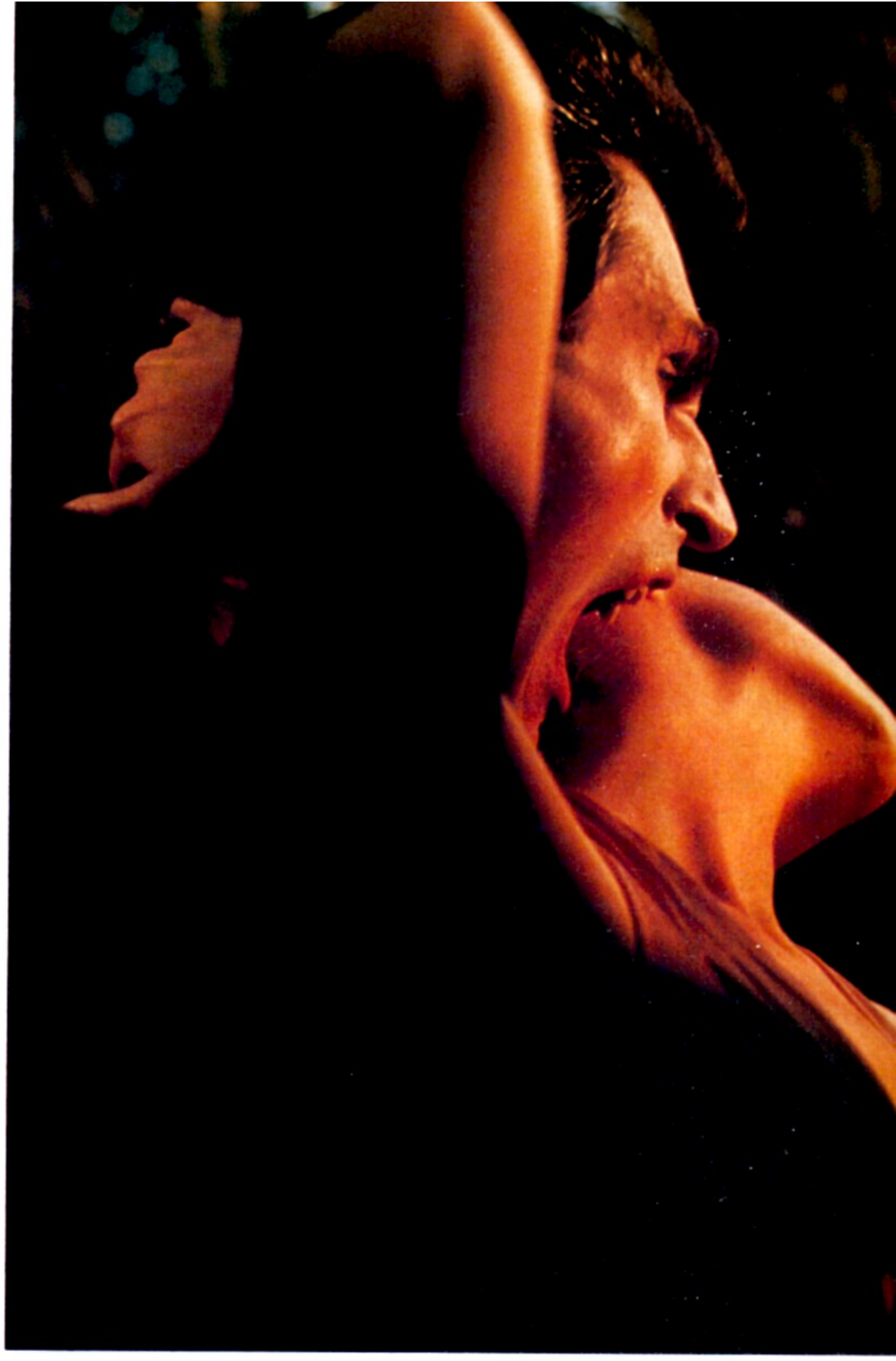


Barnabas Collins is one of the popular attempts to reinvent the vampire as a figure of sympathy, in this case a tragic hero who, a la the Wolfman, is cursed by "an affliction I cannot control to commit acts which sicken and repulse me." Below: Jonathan Frid, as the original Barnabas in the daytime soap opera. Above: Ben Cross, who recreated the role for the short-lived revival.

BEΨOND

Dracula

ADVOCATES

Chelsea Quinn Yarbro & Suzy McKee Charnas.

Anne Rice is only one of many authors currently advancing the literary genre. What's truly surprising, especially when one considers the formulaic restrictions of the vampire film, is that there is enough room for many writers to work similar fields without encroaching on each other's territory. Two of the more interesting are Chelsea Quinn Yarbro and Suzy McKee Charnas.

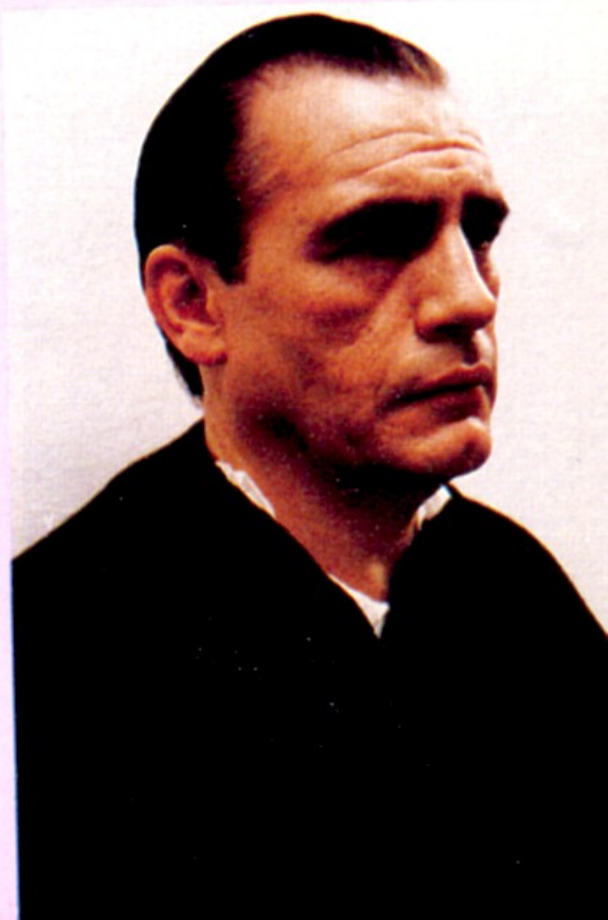
Both their characters stand outside human society, though in different ways. Yarbro's St. Germain (introduced in 1978's *Hotel Transylvania*) is one of the most noble undead ever to grace a series of novels. An ancient aristocrat, he travels through a variety of carefully researched historical settings, forever observing humanity while unable to be truly a part of it.

Charnas's Professor Weyland in *The Vampire Tapestry* is exactly the opposite, a predator, apparently a unique member of a parallel species, with no memory of his millennia on this planet and no desire to be part of any society. The authors brought their opposing characters together in "Advocates," part of the anthology *Under the Fang*, and let them debate the merits of vampire culture, so we thought to ask about what influenced their very different views of the undead:

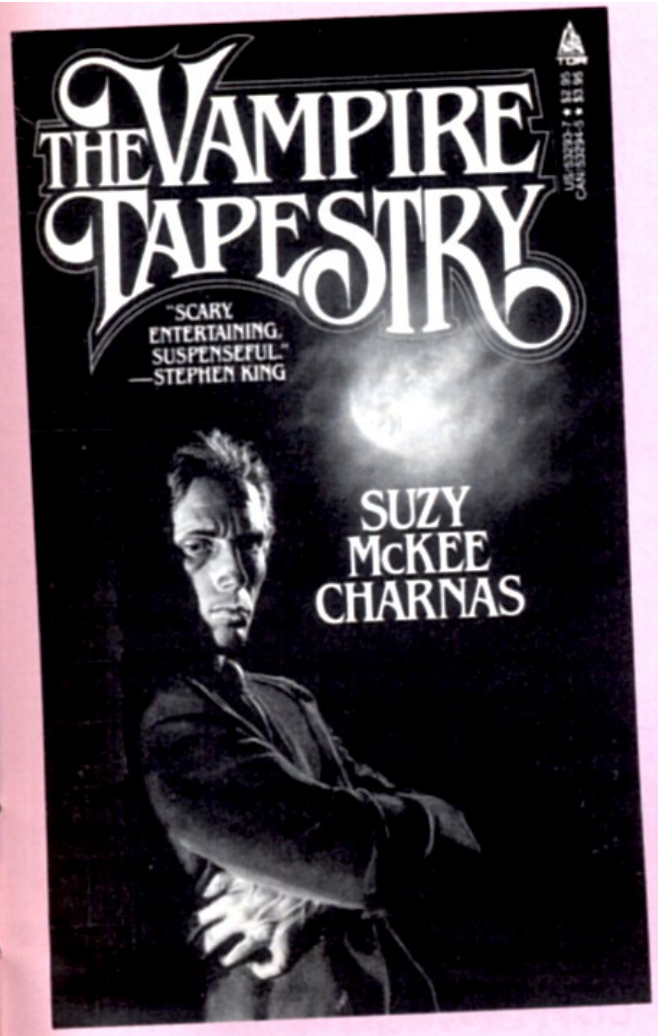
Suzy McKee Charnas: Most writers of our generation got our inspiration from the printed page. What happens when you are raised as a reader is that when you do go to films, they're pretty overwhelming. I remember being really impressed by silly things like ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN.

CQY: A wonderful movie!

SMC: It *is* wonderful, but it shouldn't send you screaming! It did influence me, to put it mildly. For a long time, the vampire thing was tightly attached to the Hungarian actor whose name we all know. I still balk when people get too far away from a

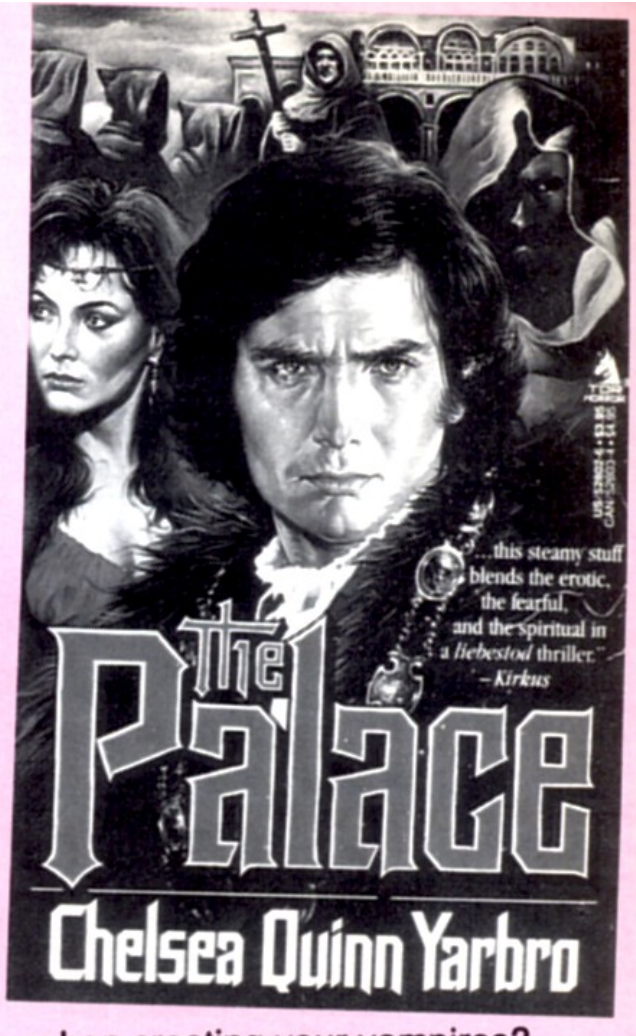


Left:"The magnificent and sensuous Countess Carmilla Karnstein," enthuses Lestat. Ingrid Pitt embodied the character in Hammer's THE VAMPIRE LOVERS as the screen's most emotional and passionate vampire. Right: Charnas sees the traditional vampire being replaced by a detached social critic, a figure she believes is recurring in various forms at the moment: "Even Hannibal Lecter is a social critic, isn't he?" Pictured, Brian Cox strikes a very Draculesque pose as the original Hannibal, in MANHUNTER.



THE VAMPIRE TAPESTRY

Mention of *Dracula* (novel). Weyland dislikes: meandering, inaccurate, those absurd fangs. Says he himself has a needle under the tongue, used to pierce skin.



basic dignity. I don't really go for the BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER-type of vampires.

IM: What about Bram Stoker?

CQY: *Dracula* is compelling in spite of things that you don't have to be very sophisticated to know are seriously wrong. It is so beautifully put together and it is so wonderful motivated—if you want to know what energy is in writing, just read it.

SMC: I don't think it's a constructed book in that sense. It's a much more primal kind of an act, and has its energy in spite of itself rather than by design. It is truly a work of genius, because it is a dreadfully written book that is an absolute classic.

CQY: Have you ever read *Lady of the Shroud*, the *other* Stoker vampire novel? It's a very strange book, because the vampire is in fact an object of trust and desire. This handsome young Englishman inherits a castle, where he is warned about the vampire, who turns out to be a lovely young woman. He takes to leaving the study door open at dusk. Reading between the lines—because it's a Victorian novel and you have to read between the lines—they indulge in a lot of heavy petting. He's falling in love with this woman, who has all these positive things going for her, except of course she's a vampire. Two-thirds of the way through, the book comes to a screeching halt, and you can tell either his editor or his conscience said, 'You can't do this!' He waffles for about three pages, and it's wonderful to read, because it's sort of like Beethoven searching for a theme. He finally says, 'She's not a vampire; she's a patriot who's taken to hiding in tombs so the bad guys won't get her.' It turns into a political thriller.

SMC: I guess the idea was just not palatable. We still have trouble with a powerful female, because we identify them with our mom. The idea sends most adults scurrying, because they don't want to be put back in the position of a three-year-old.

CQY: When you hear all these comments about Victorian womanhood, people forget that Bram Stoker's mother ran a shelter for battered women. So we're not talking about your average Victorian woman.

SMC: So there is an element of female strength in there—very heavily disguised, mind you, but it can be discerned.

IM: What do you think of the difference between Dracula in the book and in films?

CQY: Every time they do a new version, I wonder did anybody bother to read Stoker.

SMC: They can't handle it. The book's conception is a rawboned, repulsive and attractive kind of thing. These days, something's either Robert Redford or Freddy Krueger, and film people have trouble with anything in between. Everything has to be sexy.

CQY: Not only does it have to be sexy; it has to be obviously sexy. This is not SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER, guys! This is something far more complicated, and it messes about with parts of yourself that are less cleanly defined than what constitutes a sexy looking guy.

SMC: Film is only suited to certain aspects of it, and it tends to split them off and use them because they're photogenic. There are elements that are psychological and even deeper—subconscious access elements—which I think are done much more effectively verbally, which is why guys like us write instead of making movies.

CQY: That's one reason they have had trouble doing a really good filmic version of *Carmilla*. The whole effect is a cumulative thing you get with the layering build-up. Eventually you have this incredible implied history that is very unnerving.

IM: What do you think of the Coppola DRACULA?

CQY: I try not to!

SMC: I had such a good time—I thought it was so funny! It was visually extremely delicious. I don't think it's a great horror film, and I don't think it has very much to do with the power of the novel, but in its own terms it was very imaginative and effective.

IM: My biggest problem, amongst many others, was turning Lucy into a vamp even before she became a vampire.

CQY: Where in Victorian England did she get clothes like that? I am sorry—no one made anything like that back then, not even in the brothel, darling! I also found myself thinking how very odd they have Dracula in the beginning in all this Greek Orthodox finery, when the real Dracula was Catholic!

IM: Okay, you knew *Dracula*. How did you go beyond that when creating your vampires?

SMC: Dracula is not a good paradigm for vampires because there is the confusion between the historical man and the myth. Most writers will avoid the man and go to the myth, where all the resonances are.

CQY: My major source was Anthony Master's *A Natural History of Vampires*. I made a chart of all the things believed about vampires all over the world. Any time something showed up 80% of the time, I figured it was true. Anything that was less, if I liked it, I kept it; if I didn't, I threw it out. Basically, I wanted to fit as many of the legends as possible. It gave me the model from which to work. Then when I figured St. Germain was a much better vampire than a secondary character in *Hotel Transylvania*, life became much easier.

SMC: There again, you used a historical person.

CQY: He made it easy for me! I just assumed he was telling the truth. Of course he was probably just telling the best tall tales around, but they were too good to waste. There's this interesting infusion in the vampire legend: it tends to get a lot of Byronic stuff stuck to it. One of the things I wanted to avoid with the Comte was any of that Byronic concept.

IM: So you went back to mythology, but mythological

vampires are not very alluring. It seems when the Christian element was added, they became anti-Christ figures, rather than just animated corpses.

CQY: Well, there's a lot of that, but you have them all over the world in many forms. You have this wonderful heavy-handed religious impact that Christianity makes, just as you'll get the same thing in Islamic traditions, in Hindu traditions, and in Chinese traditions, basically because they don't stay dead properly. They push every religious button there is.

SMC: Once they get involved in the religious thing, they acquire a certain amount of automatic tragic stature. Once you cut the religious legs out from under the concept, a lot of that stature goes. But these are also written for other reasons, which are not religious. There tends to be an element of satire, because of the perspective on the culture from the outside. There is a pretty good dose in some of these stories of fairly complex probing of how the mind might work under extreme conditions. If you lift the death sentence we're all living under, or completely change the menu and lose all the etiquette that goes with breaking bread and all that implies, how does the mind respond to infinitely expanded horizons of life?

CQY: One of the reasons vampires have the folkloric impact that they do is they have beaten the one game none of us ever beat: they've survived death. That's what makes them so fascinating. At least for me, the whole Christian thing is the idea of the 'wrong' resurrection.

SMC: There can only be one resurrection. Anybody else has to be a bad guy; otherwise, what happens to your cross authority? As we know, Christianity has tried to chop the guts out of anything that has the remotest resemblance to being some sort of rival of how to get around the death thing.

IM: Both of you managed to "cut the religious legs out from under" your characters without reducing them to revenants.

THE PALACE

...she would have been the sort of vampire who gives our kind the hideous reputation we have gained. We are like elephants...known...for the rare one that turns rogue among us.

Charnas dislikes BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER-type vampires, but at least the film gave would-be Lestat, Rutger Hauer, a chance to don a pair of fangs.

SMC: I was not interested in using the mythology, film as well as folklore, except to play with it and reject it. I started thinking about a vampire who was not part of that system at all, who had nothing to do with superstition and Christianity, and who was simply an animal from far back in time who had developed this clever form of being a predator on our species. My major use of the stuff that I had soaked up from research was to have this vampire make fun of it and say, 'How could such a creature live with all of those strictures on its behavior?'

Instead of the traditional long memory, I gave him no memory at all. I had the same view that Quinn does, in some ways: I figured that if you actually had to be here for several thousand years and remember all of that, you would either become something of an angel—that is, you would learn to accept everything and glide thorough it as easy as you can—or you would go crazy and become a real monster. I wasn't interested in doing either of those things with this character. I wanted to keep him relatively sane and rational, given his purposes and requirements. It's funny. I look around at a lot of what's being done, in fantasy in particular, and I'm beginning to think there's a kind of figure everyone's trying to come up with, in different ways. Which is a detached, critical judge of the human race. We're trying to get back far enough to create a convincing perspective from which we can see the things that have to be changed and figure out how to change them. I see a lot of this happening in the culture now, with angels and some of the monster figures—even Hannibal Lecter, in a sense, is a social critic, isn't he?

CQY: His style of criticism is a little extreme.

SMC: Well, it's very direct: 'You eat the planet; I eat you.' I get the feeling that the wily seducer from a foreign place kind of vampire was seen much more during the Cold War. Now we're getting this detached perspective, with the monster who looks at the culture and figures out a way to fit into it but never really accepts it and shows us by his or her adventures its weaknesses.

CQY: We did a lot of this discussion when our guys were essentially wrestling each other two falls out of three in *Under the Fang*. It was a very bizarre experience, because each character has his own conception of the world. That's what most writers are trying to capture: how these people see the world. I found it fascinating how those aspects of their personalities that we had been discussing on panels for so long finally engaged directly, not as intellectual concepts but as character interaction.

SMC: Under the gun, as it were—or fang. It was a very interesting melding of the two ends of the spectrum. We sat down at the machine by turns and ended up with something that I think is pretty integrated.

CQY: I would get up when St. Germain was finished speaking. Then Suzy would write what Weyland says, and I would look at it and think, 'That isn't what I had in mind at all! What's St. Germain going to say to this?'

SMC: I'd never done that kind of collaboration. It wasn't exactly comfortable for either of us, but it was an interesting experience. We thought, 'Could it go somewhere from here?' Then we backed off and said, 'Let it lay.'

CQY: I believe sustaining that kind of tension between two major characters for anything other than a moderate length would be almost impossible without exhausting the reader.

IM: Putting them together was odd, because their individual

stories seem set in separate worlds.

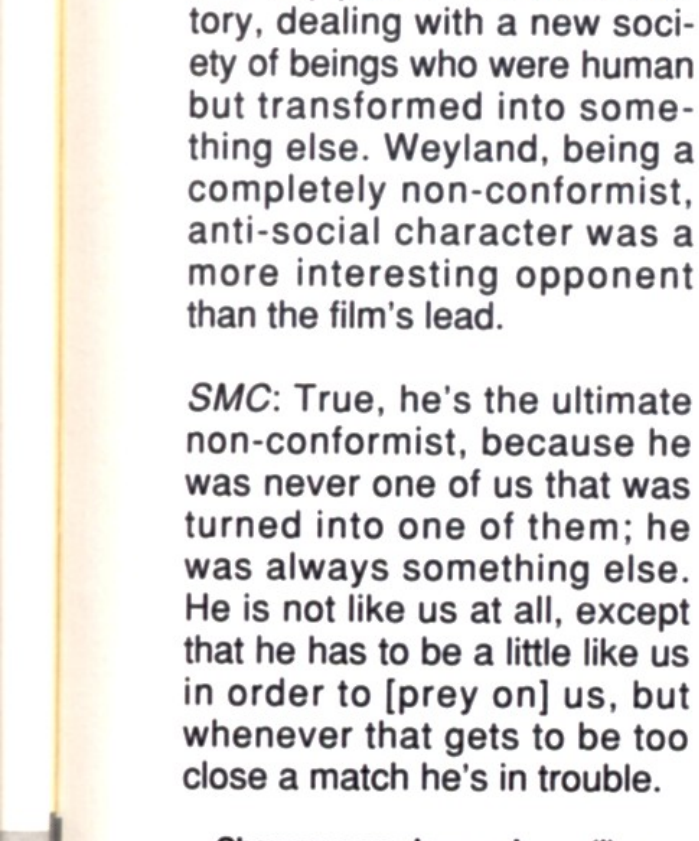
SMC: They are. The only place they could meet was this dream of the future that was essentially tailored to their broad specs, that they're both vampires. Everything else was negotiable.

CQY: The basic concept was that the population is now 50% human and 50% vampire. Dealing with that was quite intriguing. Essentially, one of the things about vampires in mythology is they tend to be removed from culture. When, whether they like it or not, they have to invent culture for themselves, how does everyone cope with this new order?

IM: Coincidentally, I read 'Advocates' about the time I saw the new BODY SNATCHERS. In a way you're on similar territory, dealing with a new society of beings who were human but transformed into something else. Weyland, being a completely non-conformist, anti-social character was a more interesting opponent than the film's lead.

SMC: True, he's the ultimate non-conformist, because he was never one of us that was turned into one of them; he was always something else. He is not like us at all, except that he has to be a little like us in order to [prey on] us, but whenever that gets to be too close a match he's in trouble.

Charnas sees Jeremy Irons (l) as Weyland. Yarbro would have liked the late James Mason as St. Germain.



CQY: The Comte is one of those guys who started out being extremely human, in a negative sense. It took him awhile to figure out this doesn't work. Once he becomes humane, instead of human, he becomes a much richer character.

SMC: And also much less like most human beings, because they're not humane. Weyland can sometimes act in humane ways, but it doesn't mean he's a human being. He has other motives, or he's aping something he's seen. I do see him as someone who is not part of cultural design and interaction, and I'm not very interested in the idea of vampires making their own culture, because it's completely mythological and, as far as I'm concerned, irrelevant to just about everything. But the idea of vampires making their own culture and then something that acts like them but isn't them rejecting the whole thing—that appealed to the impulse of the perverse in me, and I admit I have one, of fairly substantial proportions.

IM: Are there other writers who have advanced the literature?

CQY: Tanith Lee has been doing some interesting stuff. There's new series out called *Dark Dance* , a saga about a family of very peculiar vampires. It is a very unusual spin on the whole question, but it's the sort of thing she does extremely well. The nice thing about what Tanith does—and I flatter myself that Suzy and I do, too—is before we write something we try to think the premise through thoroughly, to make sure the end will in fact support the beginning.

SMC: There is a lot of cross-genre-ization going on, with vampire detectives, vampire romances, and so on, but most of this work I don't find particularly interesting. A lot of the new stuff is about people vampires—who are trying to pay their gas bill and work through all the ramifications of being a real person in the real world with this irritating habit. The problem with these modern vampires is that they have no background. Somebody turns them into a vampire

ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN "did influence me," says Charnas, linking vampires to "the Hungarian actor whose name we all know."

when they're twenty, and then they go around looking for that person. That's the common form now. St. Germain is a person, but he's been around a long time—he has some depth. When you start with someone shallow and turn him into a vampire, there's no perspective; there's nothing except 'How do I cope with this?' And coping is a one-dimensional thing.

IM: Any film offers?

CQY: An independent producer has the rights to the Comte. He is committed, and it is to his credit that he has stuck with this in the face of some difficulty. The fact is he loves and understands the character. I don't think very many writers get that luxury. The Comte is so against type, which is his biggest strength and biggest weakness—if you want the cape and dripping fangs, you're not going to get it.

SMC: I had very strong interest from Amblin Entertainment in *Vampire Tapestry*. It got all the way to the big meeting, and the boss said, 'I don't want to make another vampire movie. The world's full of them.' They're currently has been renewed interest from somebody else. It would be nice if it happens, but this particular story is difficult for filmmakers because it's episodic.

IM: What would you do if Tom Cruise were cast as either of your characters?

SMC: Take the money and run!

CQY: Well, he *is* short.

IM: So you're saying he could play St. Germain?

CQY: No, I'm saying he's short! Let's put it this way: whoever would play him would

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BEYOND Dracula

THE ADAPTABLE VAMPIRE

A brief chronicle of the moral evolution of the undead in literature and cinema.

By Patricia L. Moir

NEAR DARK, which portrays the undead as thrill-seeking rednecks, features a child vampire (Joshua Miller) who a al Rice's Claudia never grows to maturity.

This fall, as cinema audiences anticipate Anne Rice's latest descendants in the long lineage of the vampire, we should take a moment to pay homage to the noble ancestors of Louis and Lestat, to reflect on the service they have rendered. For myth is created in the service of the questioning human mind, and the vampire is one of the most enduring archetypes to populate the legends and literatures in which we conduct our quest for knowledge and meaning. Drawing on a multitude of rich and diverse traditions, the vampires of the late 20th century speak to the moral concerns of our age, illustrating both our similarities to earlier eras and our uniqueness. To understand their history is to understand no less than the evolution of our own needs, fears, and desires.

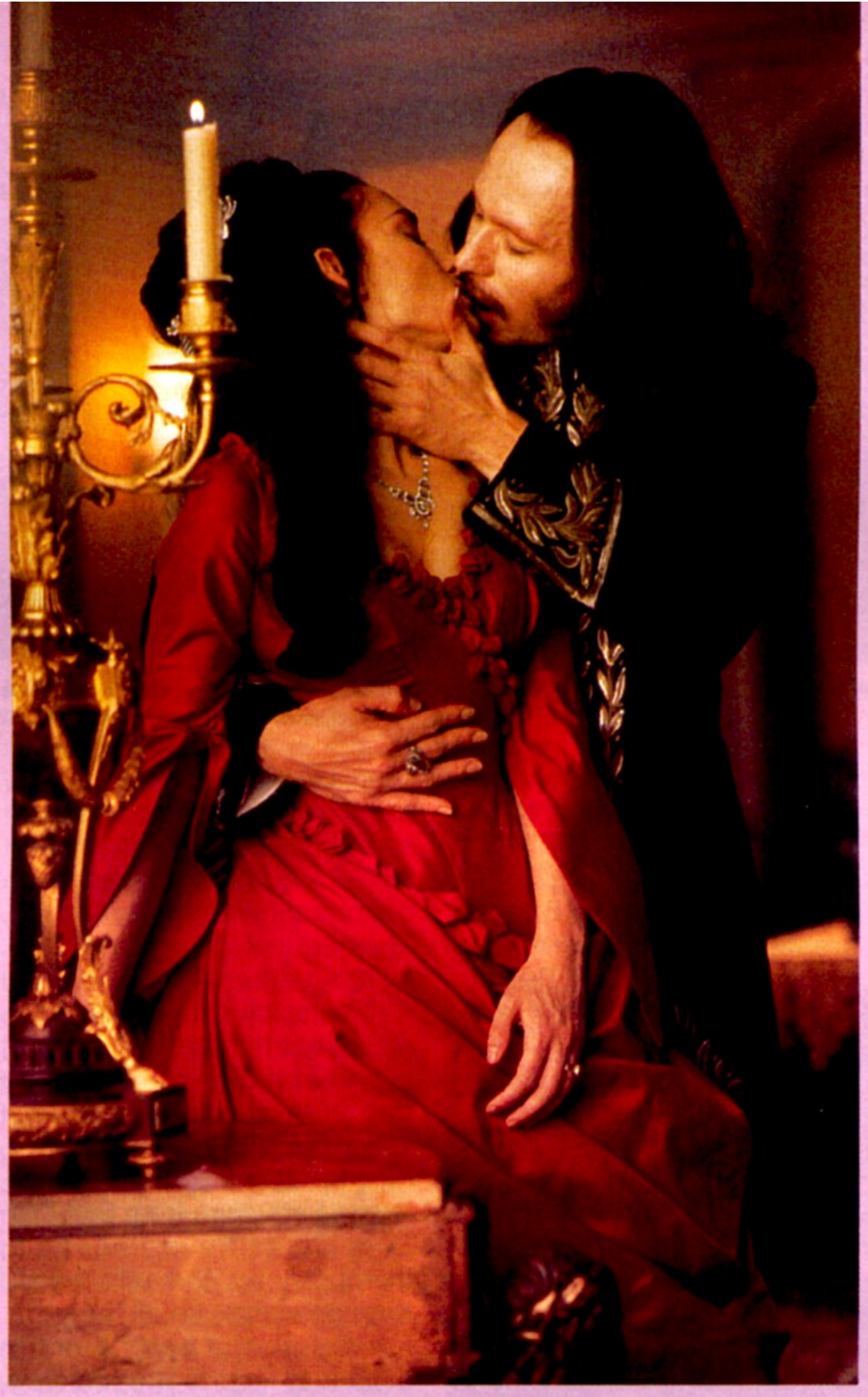
Before the 19th century, vampires were relatively unknown as major literary characters. In oral traditions, they survived in more or less the same form since pagan times. The undead were beyond God's salvation; in their soulless state, individuality was of little consequence. No matter how they became that way—by choice, birth, or misadventure—once risen from the grave, vampires were regarded as a pestilent species of beast that threatened both body and soul. They could be defeated by means both pagan and Christian, but were known to be cunning, deceitful, and powerful. Unlike their literary descendants, they were neither tragic nor tempting. To the Carpathian Slavs, whose folklore inspired writers like Bram Stoker, the idea that an animated corpse could be elegant, or even alluring, would have seemed ludicrous. Yet in the space of only a few short years, there emerged a new type of vampire in the pages of popular fiction. Intelligent, urbane, ruthless, and unquestionably noble, the vampires of the early 19th century bore little resemblance to the creatures of earlier tales. To what did they owe their sudden transformation?

The name of John Polidori is not well known, and neither (somewhat deservedly) is his work. Yet he was the creator of the prototypical Victorian vampire, on which a century and a half of literature and film would eventually be based. Vacationing one year at Lake Geneva, Polidori and his companions, Percy Shelley, Mary Godwin, and Lord Byron, decided to amuse themselves by writing ghost stories. Their light diversion turned out to have staggering artistic consequences. Though Shelley and Byron produced only fragments which were never completed, Mary (later Mrs. Shelley) single-handedly invented a modern myth by writing *Frankenstein*. And Polidori, using as his model Lord Byron, whom he adored, wrote the first Romantic vampire story.

Although modern readers tend to think of the 19th century as a period of social consensus and repressive moral restrictions, Romanticism was a well-established artistic movement by the time Polidori wrote *The Vampyre*. The Romantic poets—Byron, Shelley, Coleridge, and especially Wordsworth—promoted a view of Nature as an Eden-like reflection of a benevolent Creator. Wordsworth found God on mountaintops and celebrated the passionate inner nature of the artist. As harmless as this may sound, the logical extension of the Romantics' position seriously challenged many established beliefs. Society was based on a system of unswerving moral convictions derived from Christian doctrine; Nature, as opposed to Civilization, was viewed as unruly at best. Great energy was devoted to overcoming the disorder of natural tendencies in man and in the environment. The Romantic view of nature contradicted the idea of a tidy "civilized" morality. If God could be found in alpine thunderstorms, could he not also be found in the tempests of the human heart?

The Romantic poets lived according to their philosophy, shocking Society with their extramarital affairs, drug use, and generally scandalous behavior. Theirs was a revolution of energy and youth, and even young nonconformists were impressed with their daring. The Victorian vampire provided the sorts of vicarious thrills that the admirers of the Ro-

mantics demanded. Respectable young men and women could live out their fantasies of a Byronic lifestyle without risking reputation or social position. (For readers unfamiliar with the period, there may be no finer description of Byron's influence on early Victorian youth, and the parallel interest in vampires, than Robert Aickman's short story "Pages from a Young Girl's Journal".) Indeed, the popular glut of vampire fiction could almost be justified as morally uplifting; ultimately, Good (i.e., respectability) triumphed over Evil (social disorder), no matter how attractively the latter was portrayed. There was a moral lesson in the fact that vampires, like Lord Byron himself, usually destroyed themselves with their own excessive passions. This, of course, in no way diminished their seductiveness. Sensitive, complex, and dangerous, the Victorian vampire anti-hero was a much more compelling object of youthful desire than, for instance, the young clerk one might expect to meet in Great-Aunt Sarah's parlor. Stories catered to a complete range of tastes and styles, from pulp fiction (Rymer's *Varney the Vampire*) to the highly literate (Count Stenbock's *The Sad Story of a Vampire*).



Coppola's DRACULA: tragic romance or romantic claptrap?

Despite the fact that most youths chose to follow convention, the Romantic myth was powerful enough to endure even to the present day. (Anyone who has ever had a crush on, say, a rock musician will understand this statement completely). When teaching *Dracula* to skeptical teen-aged readers, I am amazed at the ease with which students—who, like most teenagers, are consummate conformists—fall in love with its Romantic promise of forbidden pleasures. If anything, we are even greater Romantics than our forefathers were. Bela Lugosi and Christopher Lee built popular careers on their portrayals of Romantic vampires; Frank Langella seduced audiences of stage and screen in his role as the undying Count; and Coppola's recent DRACULA unites myth, history, and literary convention in a conscious homage to the Romantic aspects of Stoker's creation. The essential theme of duty vs. desire remains forever timely, and Polidori's original vampire still flourishes, despite our frequent avowals of modern cynicism.

Had Stoker written *Dracula* any earlier, the fact that its central character was a vampire would alone have guaranteed him a healthy audience. But the Count himself is one of the last of the great Victorian literary vampires. *Dracula* is memorable because it was written at a critical moment in history, when challenges to the established order created a deep need for a mythology which would make some sense of the intellectual and spiritual complexities of the changing worldview. In spite of his limited literary abilities, and with little or no consciousness of the mythic significance of his creation, Stoker summed up the fascinating contradictions of his times and, perhaps, of human nature in general.

Apart from their obvious Romanticism, *Dracula* and other late Victorian vampire tales addressed many contemporary social concerns. Victorian convention held that ruin could not befall the blameless, a result of the irrational belief that society was necessarily just. Dickensian social criticisms notwithstanding, any young woman unfortunate enough to be treated dishonorably would likely suffer a great deal more than her seducer. Consequently, there is in the literature an implied complicity on the part of the vampire's victims. I have yet to discover a pre-Victorian oral tradition in which a vampire cannot enter one's home without a verbal invitation; apparently,Victorian victims were the first to actually "ask for it." If this subtextual detail seems trivial, consider the implications of these beliefs for today's youth, who are now being subjected to absurdly legalistic campus sexual-conduct codes in an attempt to finally dispel the myth of the Willing Victim.

Nineteenth-century vampire stories were also revolutionary in recognizing, albeit symbolically, the existence of female sexuality. J. Sheridan LeFanu's *Carmilla*, the period's *second* most famous vampire novel, reads like a psychoanalytical case history of a young woman's repressed and frustrated desires. Christian conscience triumphs, but the heroine's confrontation with her hidden self haunts her forever. Hammer's 1972 THE VAMPIRE LOVERS is a pale shadow of the dark and tragic novel; sacrificing psychological subtlety for overt lesbian sexuality, the film is mildly entertaining but inevitably disappointing to readers of the original.

Today, Coppola's DRACULA makes explicit Stoker's subtext of feminine sexual power; his film can easily be viewed as the story of respectable men's efforts to subdue and conquer the female desires awakened by Count Vlad. This may account for the fact that the film has had generally positive responses from women, while being dismissed as just so much romantic claptrap by many male horror fans. As my more astute students are quick to note, Coppola's DRACULA is primarily a tragic story of obsessive love and mutual seduction, and only incidentally a horror movie. Despite its title, Coppola's version is not *Bram Stoker's* DRACULA; it is, however, an attempt to make some sense of the sexual implications of the novel. It's a matter of taste, but I personally find it refreshing to see Mina and Lucy freed from their usual roles of helpless and dependent females.

In *Dracula*, Christian conformity prevails only at the cost of lost innocence. "Unclean!" cries Mina when she realizes the results of her succumbing to Dracula's bestial attractions. Jonathan is haunted by his "infidelity" with the vampire women.

The true horror of INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE is the lack of spiritual revelations. Louis (Pitt) will cross the ocean (left) to Paris on his quest for answers to the questions that plague him, but the only enlightenment he will find comes in the form of Armand (right), who offers only a philosophy of nihilistic despair.

Their carefully composed, respectable personae are shattered by their encounters with Dracula's bestial energy. Apart, perhaps, from Van Helsing, all the novel's human characters are driven by necessity to extremes of thought and action of which they would not have thought themselves capable.

Late 19th-century England was suffering an even more drastic loss of innocence. For better or worse, moral certainties were weakening under the assaults of Science. Romanticism had challenged social mores, but the concept of even a *natural* morality was threatened by the theories of Darwin and Freud. Nature was not, it seemed, always healthy and benevolent. The Christian order of both town and wilderness was being replaced by something altogether darker and more disturbing, a state of nature in which the chaos of destruction and extinction was inevitable. In man's unconscious mind, as well, survival, not moral conscience, was the primary driving force. Romanticism was still an essentially Christian tradition; in many cases, the Romantics simply broadened the definition of what could be good. Science, on the other hand, seemed to refute the concept of goodness altogether. Man was descended from beasts and, on the new geological time scale, was not far removed from them. God's divine sanction of human civilization became suspect, and it began to look as though man and his social institutions were, in fact, the sole arbiters of morality. While *Dracula* only hints at these conflicts, it is this *fin de siecle* crisis of spiritual conscience which has ultimately had the greatest impact on late 20th-century vampire lore. Despite the tenacity of Romantic myth, our post-Victorian faith in science has had the effect of demystifying many of our monsters.

Consider, for example, the serial killer. We imagine Jack the Ripper much as his Victorian contemporaries did, a faceless archetypal figure lurking melodramatically in the fog-shrouded alleys of London. In contrast, forensic science and media coverage have now combined to create an image of the serial killer as social misfit. The Jeffrey Dahmers of the world operate not in gaslit streets but in neon-bright bars and mass-produced apartment blocks of everyday life. Although their actions are monstrous, they themselves are curiously pathetic—victims, we are told, of childhood abuse, sexual dysfunction, and the total inability to maintain any sort of normal human relationship. They are not, in any meaningful spiritual sense, evil.

This spiritual and emotional malaise, the "death of affect," is one of the great themes of late 20th-century literature, vampire fiction included. King's *Salem's Lot*, which borrows its structure from Stoker's *Dracula*, is nevertheless a thoroughly *un*-Romantic novel. King describes, in all their banal detail, the petty human evils that lead to the undoing of his idyllic New England village. Even the local priest is unable to summon up enough faith to believe in real Evil (or Good, for that matter) when he is actually confronted with it. The salvation of *Salem's Lot* rests in the hands of an artistic non-conformist and a child whose belief system is derived from classic horror movies. Ultimately, the Romantic spirit saves the day—sort of. The human world is still, after all, unchanged. To the Victorian Romantics, the novel's unsettling conclusion, in which order is not entirely restored, would have been utterly incomprehensible.

Though inspired by Dracula, Stephen King's SALEM'S LOT offered a thoroughly unromantic view of vampires taking over a small town.

Unlike the 19th-century style vampires portrayed in Tod Browning's DRACULA and countless Hammer films, late 20th-century vampires are recognizably human, frequently retaining the ability to make moral decisions; their tragedy is not one of fate but, in the classic sense, the consequence of personal weakness. The Romantic, self-destructive vampire archetype is thoroughly deconstructed in 1987's NEAR DARK. In this small gem of a film, the undead are a gang of thrill-seeking Midwestern rednecks. Vampirism has not significantly changed these characters from what they were in life—in other words, if you're a nice person, chances are you'll be a pretty nice vampire; if you enjoy brawling in bars, you'll welcome the opportunity to cause even greater mayhem. (This theme is also touched upon, somewhat less successfully, in Joel Schumacher's THE LOST BOYS, wherein an essentially good concept is unfortunately obscured by rock-video aesthetics). Vampires are not *necessarily* evil, and it is difficult to view these very sympathetic vampires as inhuman. The death of one's soul depends on personal moral choice rather than the loss of one's free will. Human evil is

INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE

"...if God doesn't exist, we are the creatures of highest consciousness in the universe. We alone understand the passage of time and the value of every minute of human life."

once again portrayed as more significant than the evil of the supernatural.

Anne Rice's vampires face these same crises of conscience. The greatest horror of *Interview with the Vampire* is not the threat of supernatural evil, but the existential realization that moral judgment is just as vague and relativistic for vampires as it is for the living. No great spiritual questions are answered, no mysteries revealed. Despite their Romantic Grand Guignol trappings, Rice's Vampire Chronicles are utterly contemporary.

Taking its central concept from Rice's Lestat, who attempts to rationalize his actions by feeding only on "evildoers," INNOCENT BLOOD (which should, perhaps, have been subtitled *La Vampire Nikita*) portrays its vampire as a crime-fighting heroine. The film's vigilante concept of justice is morally questionable, to say the least, but it is particularly interesting that the vampire is no longer an *anti*-hero but a hero. (Adopting a more sophisticated stance in *The Tale of the Body Thief*, Rice undermines Lestat's "fire-with-fire" attempt to redeem himself by using his evil to destroy evil: he realizes the serial killer he is stalking is not an "evildoer" but a pathetic slave of his own compulsions.)

George Romero's MARTIN stands out as a work of both remarkable insight and considerable structural complexity. Set in the industrial wasteland of a contemporary Pittsburgh suburb, MARTIN is more concerned with the life-draining despair of dead-end jobs and failed relationships than with the drawing of blood. Church, family, and workplace are no longer able to provide the security of human attachments, and Martin's acts of vampirism become a metaphor for the desperate masses' devouring of each other. In *A Dream of Dracula*, Leonard Wolf comments on the way group therapy patients feed on each other's misery. In MARTIN, the lonely, the curious, and the insane find human contact on a late-night radio call-in show, which entertains them with Martin's earnest disclosures of his fears and failures. After his death, callers continue to speculate on the identity of the anonymous vampire. The film's last words are chilling: One caller states, "I have a friend I think is the Count." We know that he may be right; Romero has made it clear that there are plenty of other potential Martins out there. This is the vampire at his least awesome. No longer the archetypal Other, he now looks just like the rest of us.

Martin is resigned to the fact that there is no magic in what he does. In our technology-loving century, there is little tolerance of the supernatural. It is no surprise, therefore, that science has caught up with our vampires. Dan Simmons' *Children of the Night* owes a great deal to recent research in virology and immunotherapy. Simmons' vampires suffer from a rare, hereditary blood disorder which allows them to regenerate tissue and fight infection with remarkable efficiency, provided they are able to cannibalize the blood tissues of others. Once again, the condition itself is not necessarily evil, and its sufferers' needs can be met with regular blood transfusions. In fact, the vampire DNA promises a cure for diseases of the immune system, from AIDS to cancer. It is the evil of certain self-serving vampires, and not vampirism *per se*, which provides the novel's conflict.

Although not as well extrapolated as Simmons' work, Richard Matheson's groundbreaking *I Am Legend* and David Cronenberg's RABID also provide scientific explanations for vampirism. Even though both works are now over two decades old, theirs is still the contemporary radical fringe of the genre, in which vampires, like Clive Barker's NIGHTBREED, are only *perceived* as evil because of their abnormality. Morally ambiguous in social *and* natural terms, their themes are directly relevant to our modern dilemma over the role which we are now playing in our own species' evolution. The development of genetic engineering and artificial intelligence will soon require us to make major moral decisions, in comparison to which the conflicts of the late Victorians seem almost insignificant. As always, vampire fiction reflects and anticipates our concerns, and offers alternative ways to their resolution.

The vampire has come a long way from his roots in Eastern European folklore. His many incarnations have mirrored the moral evolution of the last two centuries of Western civilization, and he has been our constant companion from the eras of conservative and Romantic Christianity to our present age of spiritual and scientific uncertainty. Whether he symbolizes the rise of new moral questions or the revival of old conflicts unresolved, his aspect is an unfailing indicator of our own condition as a society. We would be wise, when we next encounter him, to consider his splendid lineage and the eternal questions that he may one day help us to answer. □

INNOCENT BLOOD (above and right) steals the concept of a vampire (Anne Parilaud) hunting killers. When Lestat tells his side of the story, he will insist of his INTERVIEW victims (below): "The whores I feasted upon in front of Louis...had drugged and robbed many a seaman who was never seen alive again." In *Tale of the Body Thief*, he even takes up hunting serial killers.

LOS VAMPIROS

A look at bloodsuckers south-of-the-border, from EL VAMPIRO to CRONOS.

By David Wilt

Although a few local characters—La Llorona and the Aztec Mummy, for example—have been featured in Mexican fantasy cinema, the most popular film menace south of the border is actually a Transylvanian import, by way of Hollywood: the vampire. In the 35 years from EL VAMPIRO (1957) to CRONOS (1992), vampires have appeared in nearly four dozen Mexican films.

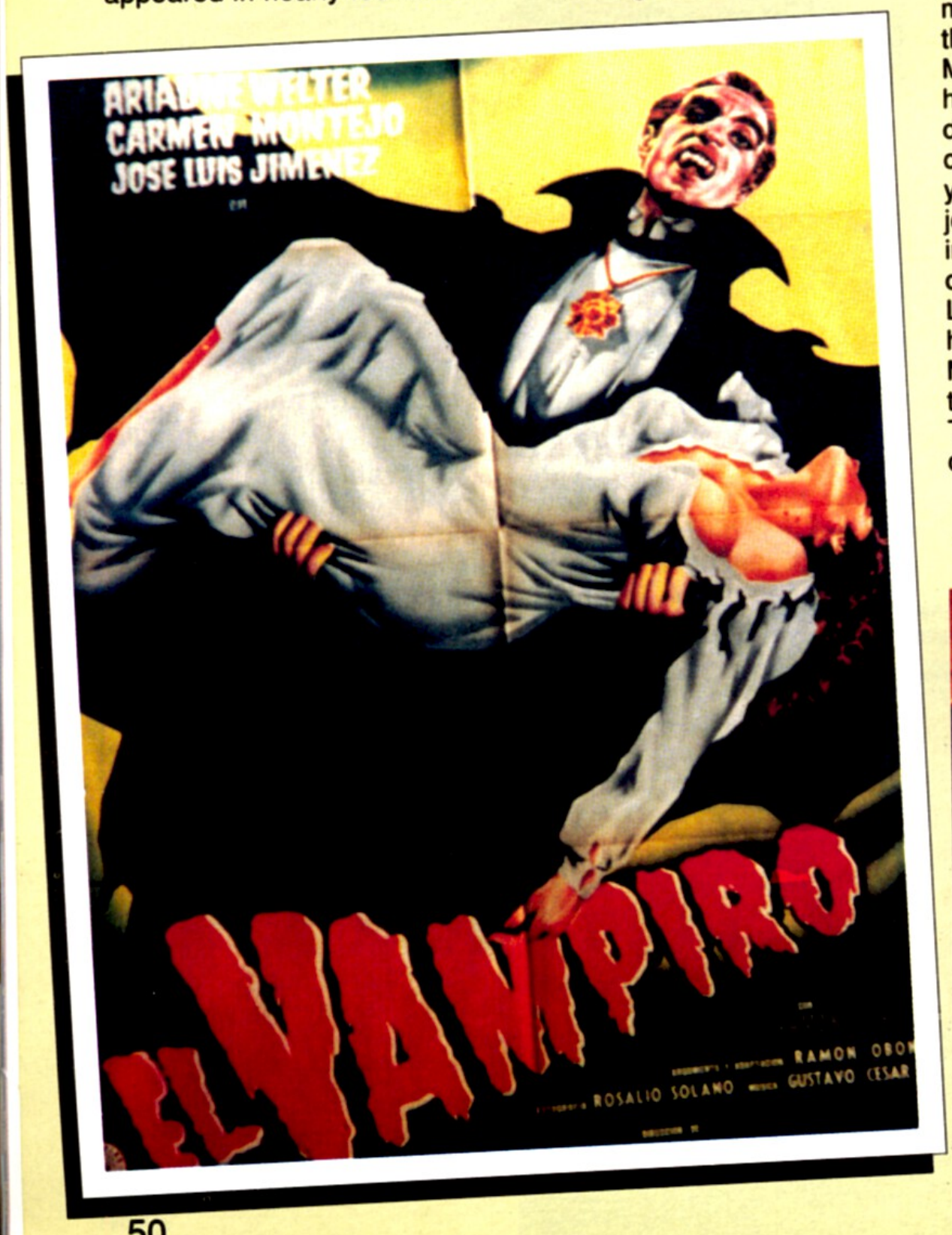
EL VAMPIRO was one of the seminal films of the Mexican horror cycle of the late 1950s-early 1960s. With virtually no previous Mexican models, director Fernando Méndez and screenwriter Ramón Obón were heavily inspired by foreign sources—particularly Hollywood films, setting the pattern for the numerous Mexican vampire movies that followed.

Making his film debut as the vampire Duval was the talented Germán Robles. Duval wears formal evening clothes and a cape, changes into a bat, and casts no reflection. In a departure from Hollywood tradition, he actually exposes his fangs, an innovation picked up the following year by Hammer Films' HORROR OF DRACULA.

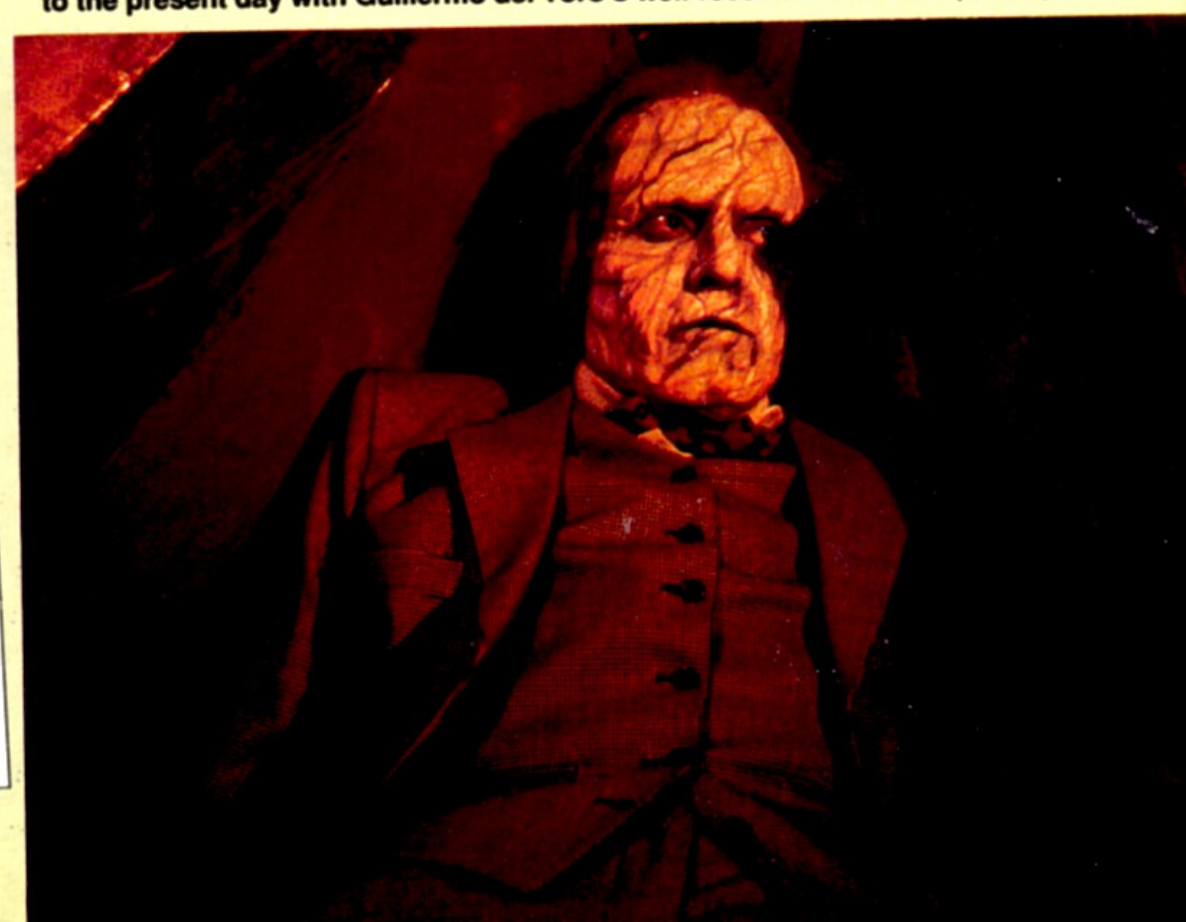
As the film opens, Martha (Ariadna Welter) and Enrique (Abel Salazar, also the film's producer) travel to "Los Sicamoros," her childhood home in the Mexican countryside where Martha is saddened to learn of her aunt María Teresa's recent death. She is consoled by her other aunt, the surprisingly-youthful Eloísa (Carmen Montejo). Eloísa is actually a vampire in league with Duval, a descendant of the Hungarian Count Lavud, who wants to vampirize her and take over the hacienda. Martha is saved through the timely intervention of María Teresa, who had faked her death to fool the vampiric duo.

EL VAMPIRO has some serious flaws. Duval is off-screen most of the time, and there are too many long dialogue scenes between Enrique and Martha. The plot has several glaring holes: if Eloísa is a vampire, why doesn't anyone in the household notice she's never around during the day? How does the frail María Teresa overcome her so easily? Why does Duval—a supernatural being who can turn into a bat and walk through walls—use a sword in his climactic struggle with Enrique? These deficiencies are more than offset, however, by the assured direction of Méndez, the superb photography of Rosalío Solano, and Gunther Gerszo's excellent art direction. María Teresa's funeral is an impressive, visually striking sequence, and the entire film is suffused with an eerie, brooding atmosphere.

Robles is suave and menacing as Duval, and Carmen Montejo is quite good as his sensuous assistant, the traitorous Eloísa. On the other hand,



Mexican vampire cinema began in 1957 with THE VAMPIRE (left) and continues to the present day with Guillermo del Toro's well-received CRONOS (below).



Although an overall weak entry, WORLD OF THE VAMPIRES features some aggressive female vamps and the coolest pipe organ imaginable.

Salazar—known primarily for his roles in romantic comedies—makes a rather inept hero. After all, it is the elderly María Teresa who subdues Eloísa *and* stakes Duval!

EL VAMPIRO was an immediate success. A month after its Mexico City premiere, Salazar reassembled most of the original cast and crew for a sequel, EL ATAUD DEL VAMPIRO (THE VAMPIRE'S COFFIN). Returning were Méndez, Gerszo, composer Gustavo C. Carrión, and actors Robles, Welter, Salazar, and Alicia Montoya (as María Teresa). The CLASA studios had closed shortly after the filming of EL VAMPIRO, so the film was shot at the spacious Churubusco facility instead.

A misguided scientist steals the body of Duval (now referred to as Count Lavud) and brings it to the hospital where Enrique works. The scientist's unscrupulous assistant removes the stake from Lavud's chest, inadvertently reviving the vampire. Lavud takes up residence in a nearby wax museum and resumes his pursuit of Martha. At the film's conclusion Enrique tosses a javelin at Lavud (in bat form), pinning him to the wall of the museum.

Despite a few good scenes, EL ATAUD DEL VAMPIRO is significantly inferior to its predecessor. EL ATAUD's best moments are the opening theft of the vampire's coffin from its crypt, and Lavud's stalking of a young woman through the deserted streets of the city. Robles has more footage in the sequel, but so does Salazar, whose character is even more frenetic and inept this time around. Most of the action takes place in the hospital and wax museum, far less atmospheric locales than the ruined hacienda of EL VAMPIRO. The film is also harmed by its ubiquitous fake bats, swooping around on (very visible) strings and squeaking like demented rubber cat toys.

After a guest role as a vampire in the comedy EL CASTILLO DE LOS MONSTRUOS (THE CASTLE OF THE MONSTERS, 1957), followed by some non-horror pictures, Robles was signed by the América studios to appear in a new series about a vampiric descendant of the medieval seer Nostradamus: LA MALDICION DE NOSTRADAMUS; NOSTRADAMUS, EL GENIO DE LAS TINIEBLAS; NOSTRADAMUS Y EL DESTRUCTOR DE MONSTRUOS; and LA SANGRE DE NOSTRADAMUS. All four star Robles as the villain, veteran actor Domingo Soler as his Van Helsing-like nemesis, and Julio Alemán as Soler's assistant. Former actor Federico Curiel directed the entire series.

The NOSTRADAMUS films, a bit too talky at times, are nonetheless atmospherically directed and photographed; the low budgets and relatively meager technical resources of the América studios make the films look rather dated and crude compared to the slick Churubusco studios product, but this actually works to their advantage in some ways. Robles' character (wearing a goatee to accentuate his diabolical appearance), although a vampire, is actually more of a super villain. Establishing a reign of superstition and fear, rather than blood-drinking, is his primary goal.

EL MUNDO DE LOS VAMPIROS (THE WORLD OF THE VAMPIRES, 1960) marked producer Salazar's return to the vampire genre. Méndez was replaced by director Alfonso Corona Blake, and Robles by a young Argentine actor, Guillermo Murray. Sergio Subotai (Murray), another undead nobleman, wants to avenge the death of his Transylvanian ancestor at the hands of the Kolman family. Once the Kolmans are extinct, the undead can go on to conquer the world. But Subotai can't get past step one: although he turns Leonor Kolman (Erna Martha Bauman) into a vampire, he fails to kill her sister and their uncle, and winds up impaled on a wooden spike.

A crucial aspect of EL MUNDO DE LOS VAMPIROS's plot is music which repels vampires: awkwardly presented, this is more laughable than interesting. EL MUNDO has little of the atmospheric *mise en scene* of the Méndez films; perhaps in compensation, the ranks of the undead are swollen by a gang of bat-men (in poorly designed masks) and a legion of vampire women in diaphanous gowns. In a masterpiece of miscalculation, Subotai himself sprouts huge, furry bat-ears in his final confrontation with the hero (Mauricio Garcés). On the other hand, the scenes of a vampire-victim gradually turning into a bat-man are effectively handled.

After his work on EL MUNDO DE LOS VAMPIROS, Blake was hired to direct SANTO CONTRA LAS MUJERES VAMPIRO (SANTO VS. THE VAMPIRE WOMEN, 1962). EL MUNDO's clumsy bat-men were replaced by Mexican wrestlers dressed in black tights and capes, while the sensuous vampire women (led by Ofelia Montesco and Lorena Velázquez) took over center stage.

THE VAMPIRE AND SEX is actually an alternate version of SANTO AND THE TREASURE OF DRACULA, featuring additional footage of topless vampires.

The vampires select an innocent young woman (María Duval) as their new queen, but are foiled by the heroic actions of Santo. The film is greatly superior to EL MUNDO DE LOS VAMPIROS, with excellent photography and art direction, a good supporting cast, and the undeniably charismatic presence of El Santo.

Director Miguel Morayta contributed a pair of films to the cycle, EL VAMPIRO SANGRIENTO (THE BLOODY VAMPIRE) and LA INVASION DE LOS VAMPIROS. Both have impressive opening sequences: in the first, a spectral coach races along a country road, the horses' hooves making no sound; in the second, a man follows a beautiful young woman to the Lagoon of Death and watches as she disrobes and enters the icy waters. While neither film quite lives up to the promise of these effective scenes, Morayta's scripts are still interesting. The films depict the struggle between Count Frankenhausen (Carlos Agosti) and various youthful disciples of the alchemist Caligostro. An acid extracted from the Black Mandragora can "cure" vampires (i.e., make them really dead), but it takes two films to finally subdue Frankenhausen and his undead associates. There are some interesting Gothic touches and plot twists, and Agosti makes a good villain.

A variety of one-shot vampire films followed, including FRANKENSTEIN, EL VAMPIRO Y COMPANÍA, an uncredited remake of ABBOTT AND COSTELLO MEET FRANKENSTEIN. LA HUELLA MACABRA (THE MACABRE

German Robles returned in THE VAMPIRE'S COFFIN before starring in the NOSTRADAMUS series.

CRONOS

Director Guillermo Del Toro on his fusion of vampirism and alchemy.

By Steve Biodrowski

Del Toro directs Ron Perlman (BEAUTY AND THE BEAST) as the vicious American thug, Angel de la Guardia, while Tamara Shanath watches.

Although Mexican vampire films of the past have had a tendency to adhere to the Lugosi-Dracula mold borrowed from Universal's classic pictures, when writer-director Guillermo del Toro set out to create his own version of the myth, he opted to overturn the traditional cliches by creating a vampire derived from alchemy rather than Christianity. Del Toro (like Anne Rice) is a lapsed Catholic—"or still a Catholic but quite repentant," he jokes. "Alchemy had always attracted me as a philosophical viewpoint, because it doesn't talk about Good and Evil, *per se*; it talks about purity and non-purity as a process [of transfiguration], and once you start the process there is no going back. I found that alchemy and Catholic mythology complimented each other very well. For example, the female image in Catholicism is either a virginal woman or a whore of Babylon—there is no middle point. On the other hand, in alchemy, 'female' represents a a being that connects with nature and has all this power and understanding of the dark side, which is what the girl [Aurora, played by Tamara Shanath] is in the movie, in a way."

The way these two complimentary outlooks were fused by Del Toro can be seen in the undead life of the unfortunate protagonist (Federico Luppi). Whereas the alchemist's life work was a process of purification and perfection (represented by the search for the philosophers' stone, which was supposed to transmute base metals into gold), Jesus Gris undergoes a much more humiliating process in the film, sort of a reverse passion play in keeping with the obvious symbolic value of the character's name. "I made him sort of a barbaric Jesus," says Del Toro. "He resurrects on the third day, with this red cape like the one put on Christ's shoulders by the soldiers; he has some sort of stigmata in his hands and chest; he gets some sort of crucifixion or sacrifice to redeem himself. He goes through a strange process of pay-up for the vanity of evil that he has gone through."

This sense of penance and redemption—the climax is not a gory set-piece but a simple moral decision—lends a traditional metaphysical resonance often missing from other modern secular vampires. "That's very Catholic, probably, but it's not something that I deliberately considered," says the writer-director. "I wanted the movie to be the descent into perversity of this guy. Some people say they can't take that the character is always punished and humiliated, and every single horrible thing that you can think of is done to him. That's what I wanted: a guy that is reactive but not active, and in the last ten minutes of the film he makes two major decisions and becomes more alive after death than when we first encountered him as this sort of graying Gepetto-like shop owner."

This humiliation of the character is not a matter of directorial sadism, however. In fact, the underlying humanity of Del Toro's approach helps overcome the potential similarity to the acerbicly satiric DEATH BECOMES HER, which was released while CRONOS was in production. "We were shooting when someone said, 'You have to watch this,' and I said, 'Oh, fuck!' There is a certain similarity—both deal with resurrected, immortal characters—but the take is so different. Undying characters have been done to death, so the only difference is the details of how you tell the story. For me, this is a movie that combines tenderness and the grotesque in a very peculiar way that I've seldom seen. That attracted me to the premise: the possibility of using very tender moments and putting them against harsh images. That contrast was unique for me." □

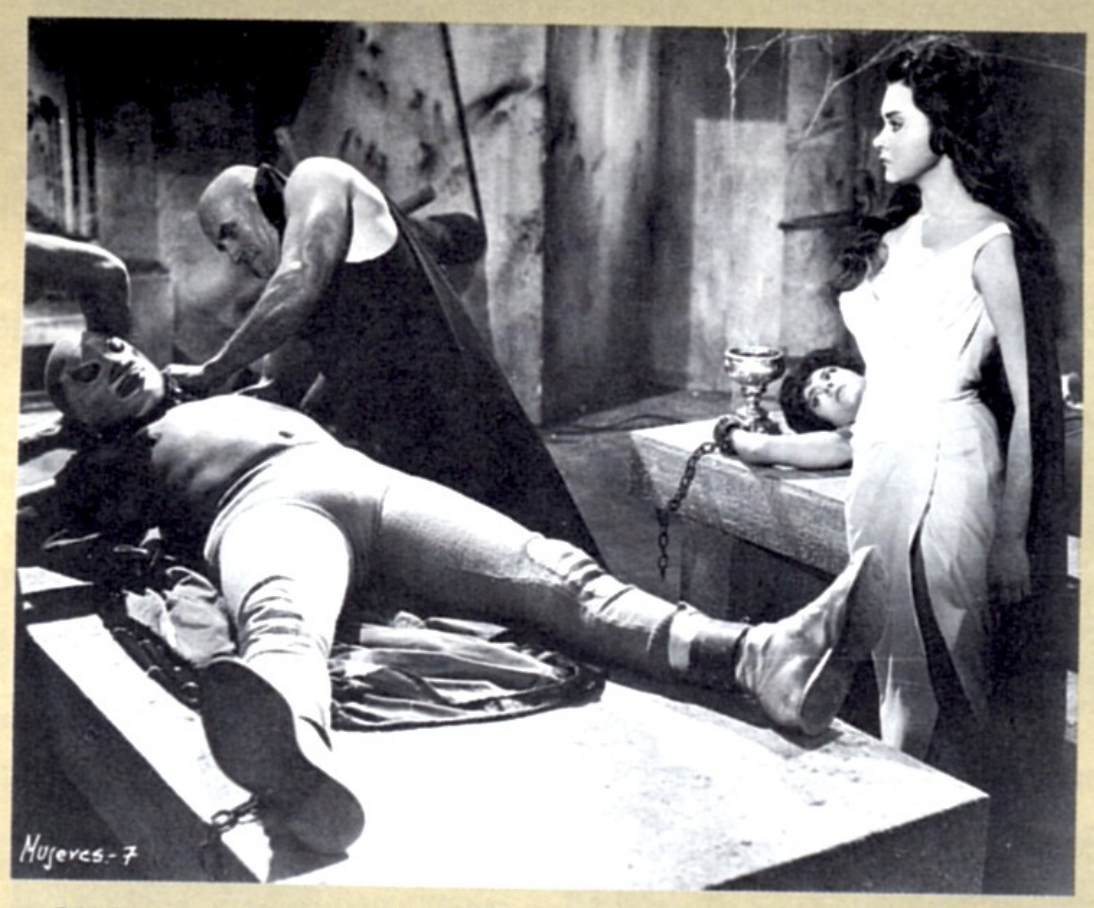
MARK) featured a vampire child in league with the film's primary villain (not a vampire himself). In the horror-Western EL PUEBLO FANTASMA (THE GHOST TOWN), the cowboy hero kills a cowboy-vampire with a silver bullet. EL CHARRO DE LAS CALAVERAS (THE CHARRO OF THE SKULLS) was a very cheap and crude film about a Lone Ranger-type character who fights a werewolf, a vampire, and a headless horseman.

Over the next several years, a flood of Mexican vampire films appeared. EL IMPERIO DE DRACULA (THE EMPIRE OF DRACULA, 1966), the first color Mexican vampire film, was closely modeled on DRACULA, PRINCE OF DARKNESS, down to an imitation of the Hammer film's opening sequence (itself a reprise of HORROR OF DRACULA's climax), and the same, gory method of reconstituting a vampire from his ashes. Like Christopher Lee's Dracula, Eric del Castillo's feral Count Draculstein is a man of few words (he has only one line of dialogue in the entire film). Federico Curiel—director of the NOSTRADAMUS series—attempted to replicate the lush decor and bombastic action of the Hammer films, with some success.

LA ENDEMONIADA (THE POSSESSED ONE, 1967) was inspired by Mario Bava's BLACK SUNDAY. 400 years after she is convicted of witchcraft and chained in a dungeon with a metal mask nailed to her face, Fausta (Argentine actress Libertad Leblanc) returns to life with the aid of her vampire consort, Gustavo (Enrique Rocha). She wreaks havoc among the mortals she encounters, who can't tell the difference between the evil Fausta and her double, the good Lucia. At the climax, Gustavo has a fireplace poker rammed through his heart, and Fausta reverts to her long-dead state. The film, directed by Emilio Gómez Muriel and scripted by Alfredo Ruanova (one of the writers on the NOSTRADAMUS series), downplays the vampire aspects of its plot, concentrating instead on Fausta's sexy sorcery.

LAS VAMPIRAS (THE VAMPIRE WOMEN, 1968) is one of four horror pictures John Carradine made for producer Luis Enrique Vergara, and one of

Although a few local characters have been featured in Mexican fantasy cinema, the most popular menace is a Transylvanian import by way of Hollywood: vampires.



SANTO VERSUS THE VAMPIRE WOMEN (1962) is but one example of the many popular confrontations between masked wrestlers and monsters.

seven wrestler vs. vampire films made between 1965 and 1973. Eschewing the grim atmosphere of EL IMPERIO DE DRACULA, Federico Curiel directed LAS VAMPIRAS in a colorful and entertaining comic-book style. Carradine plays Branos, deposed as king of the Undead by a bunch of rebellious female vampires wearing green leotards and green lipstick. He spends most of the film locked in a cage, pretending to be senile and plotting to regain his throne. Eventually all of the vampires, male and female, are wiped out by wrestler Mil Máscaras and reporter Pedro Armendáriz, Jr.

Santo's numerous encounters with vampires in this period varied widely in quality and tone. SANTO Y BLUE DEMON CONTRA LOS MONSTRUOS (1968), produced by the penurious Sotomayor company, is the least interesting, despite the presence of multiple vampires, a Frankenstein-type monster, a mummy, an alien dwarf, and a giant Cyclops (the latter recycled from Sotomayor's EL NAVE DE LOS MONSTRUOS, 1959). SANTO Y EL TESORO DE DRÁCULA (SANTO AND THE TREASURE OF DRACULA), also known as EL VAMPIRO Y EL SEXO, is somewhat better. One version, apparently not released in Mexico, features a large number of topless female vampires under the command of Dracula (Aldo Monti)—in the domestic version, the vampire women are fully clad. More vampire women plagued Santo in LA VENGANZA DE LAS MUJERES VAMPIRO (1970), the seventh and last vampire film directed by Federico Curiel.

One of the best wrestler vs. vampire films was SANTO Y BLUE DEMON CONTRA DRÁCULA Y EL HOMBRE LOBO (1972), a slick and well-plotted picture featuring Aldo Monti, in a repeat performance as Count Dracula, and Agustín Martínez Solares as Rufus Rex, his werewolf sidekick. The heroic wrestlers battle the monstrous duo, who are assisted by an evil hunchback, several vampire women, and a pack of werewolf henchmen. As in EL MUNDO DE LOS VAMPIROS, the vampire's lair contains a rather risky amenity: a pit full of stakes, which in the end proves the monster's undoing.

Vampire films (and fantasy films in general) appeared much less frequently after the mid-1970s. MARY, MARY, BLOODY MARY (1974) and LA DINASTIA DRÁCULA (1978) were two exceptions. The former was a U.S.-Mexican co-production featuring model Cristina Ferrare as a woman obsessed with blood-drinking (but not a supernatural vampire) and, in a cameo role, John Carradine.

LA DINASTIA DRACULA is a more traditional effort set in the late 19th century, with an effective colonial-era prologue showing a vampire's execution by the Inquisition. The film is a semi-remake of EL VAMPIRO—the villain tries to convince the owners of a hacienda to sell him their property (named "Los Sicamoros," after the earlier film), and in the meantime pursues their daughter. Relative unknown Roberto Nelson plays the "Baron," who—with his long hair, sideburns, and fangs—somewhat resembles a blood-sucking Elvis. In one sequence, clearly inspired by Stoker's novel, the hero and a priest track a female vampire to her coffin, drive a stake through her heart, and fill her mouth with garlic cloves.

Few Mexican vampire films have been produced in recent years. EL VAMPIRO TEPOROCHO (THE WINO VAMPIRE, 1988) stars comedian Pedro Weber "Chatanuga" as a flabby Count Dracula stranded in Mexico and befriended by a bunch of low-lifes. The film, although made on an extremely low budget, is good for a few laughs, including one amusing sight gag involving Dracula and some condoms, and a scene in which Dracula (in bat form) is sprayed with insecticide.

The slick and (by Mexican standards) expensive CRONOS (1992) is director Guillermo del Toro's revisionist look at the Universal and Hammer horror films he saw in his youth. Federico Luppi portrays an old man who discovers an antique device that delivers eternal youth—at a price: the owner becomes a quasi-vampire (though the word "vampire" is not used in the film). Shocking, funny, gross, and tender, CRONOS has gained a deserved reputation as a superior genre effort, and won an Ariel (Mexico's Oscar) as Best Picture. □

NEW BLOOD
By Randy Palmer

VAMPIRE CIRCUS
Hammer Gothic, mixed with surrealism.

After revitalizing the horror genre in the late 1950s with their reworkings of Frankenstein and Dracula, Hammer Films had become its own worst enemy by the end of the '60s, producing cut-rate retreads of once-fresh ideas. However, before completely killing off the ghoulden goose of Gothic gore, they produced a sampling of outstanding thrillers in the 1970s that rival their early successes. One of the most remarkable is VAMPIRE CIRCUS.

No one was expecting a miracle when a no-name cast of British character actors was assembled on leftover sets and with a smaller-than-usual budget, so it came as rather a shock when the finished film turned out to be one of the company's strongest since 1963's KISS OF THE VAMPIRE. Under Robert Young's fresh-faced direction, the expected vampiric turns were twisted from dead-ends into express lanes, with absolutely no turn-offs. The film veered in directions completely off the face of the compass, exploring regions unmapped by any previous Hammer production. Some of it went even further than their new adults-only affairs (THE VAMPIRE LOVERS, COUNTESS DRACULA), the Gothic framework merely a backdrop against which played a coquettish fable of evil eroticism, bedeviling audiences and critics alike.

As Donald F. Glut correctly observed in THE DRACULA BOOK, Anthony Corland's Emil (seen above) looks more like a rock star than a vampire. VAMPIRE CIRCUS portrays its vampires as the period's equivalent of rock-n-rollers, charismatic performers who seduce the local population.

The film opens with a protracted pre-credits sequence, which introduces Count Mitterhouse (Robert Tayman), a vampire who has been seducing the daughters of the village of Stetl. The sexually depraved Anna (Domini Blythe), wife of stuffed-shirt schoolteacher Mueller (Laurence Payne), absconds with the pre-pubescent daughter of Schilt (John Bown), and offers the child to Mitterhouse. Swooning while watching the Count suck blood from the girl's throat, Anna's vicarious thrill telegraphs an unmistakable message to the viewer: this isn't your standard Hammer film, and it certainly isn't your typical horror film. Of course, Hammer always hinted that ladies liked being bitten by Dracula, but what other film would *dare* suggest that a grown woman gets off watching a vampire ravage a helpless 10-year-old? Director Young makes sure we realize that in this cinematic universe sex and horror are two sides of the same guinea.

While Anna swoons and Mitterhouse feasts, the ineffectual Mueller is rounding up a posse. "Your daughter is in there, and my wife!" he warns. "If your wife is in there, maybe she wanted to go," says Schilt, a painful reminder of Anna's ungodly betrayal. Young cuts to the vampire's bed, where we see Mitterhouse and Anna together. "One lust feeds the other," says the Count. Well, okay. (This scene was one of several cut for American release.)

The Burgomaster (Hammer stalwart Thorley Walters) leads the attack on Mitterhouse's castle (eagle eyes will spot inserts from SCARS OF DRACULA and LUST FOR A VAMPIRE here). Inside they find the body of little Jenny Schilt (Jane Darby), a jagged rip in her throat still oozing blood—another taboo broken by the film.

Actually, this is the kind of thing that was needed in 1972, to make audiences sit up and take notice the way their parents or older siblings did in 1958, when HORROR OF DRACULA shocked a laid-back movie-going public. How many times have you seen a child victimized on-screen?

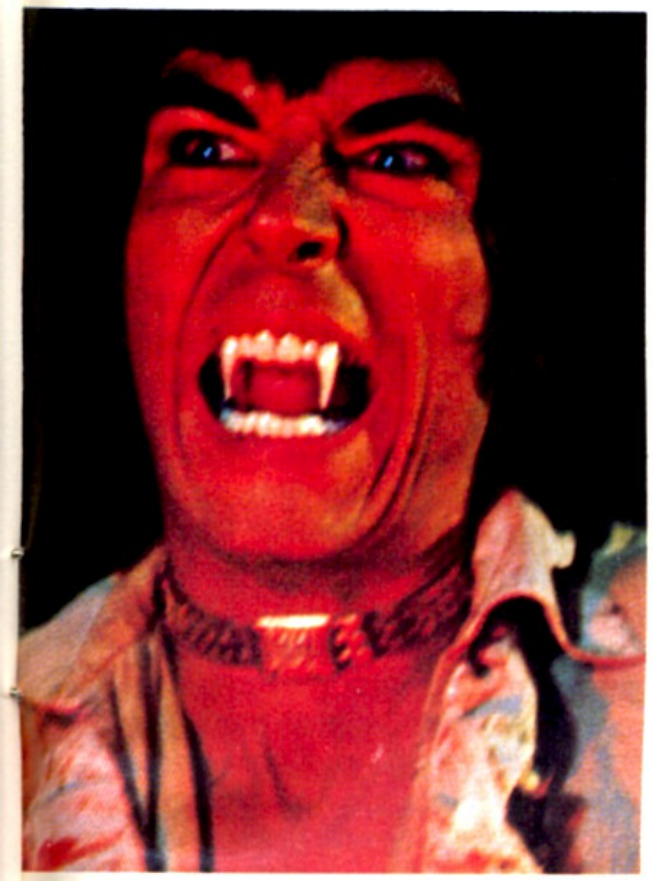
Mitterhouse is finally destroyed, but not before he gets in one last jibe. "What have you done with my wife?" demands Mueller—to which the Count deadpans, "Only what she wanted, schoolmaster." Ahem. An enormous stake is shoved through the vampire's heart, and with his dying breath, he curses the town and its future generations.

All this, believe it or not, happens before the opening credits. Afterwards, the film takes on a more standard Hammer horror look, but the power of the first ten minutes are never lost. This is a defiant film that demands to be noticed.

Judson Kinberg, who penned the script for THE COLLECTOR (1965), had no prior experience with horror films, but he did a marvelous job combining elements of the usual with the unusual, and pushing back the boundaries of contemporary horror in the process. Besides the circus animals, a twist on the lycanthropy legend, hallucinatory sequences involving mirrors and dimensional warps, there's also more than a few references to bats and plagues, which appear to be interchangeable. Fifteen years after the death of the Count, the people of Stetl are dying—not from any old curse, but from the ravages of a sickness that has descended over Europe. Dr. Kersh (Richard Owens) scoffs at the vampire legends, but by the time he returns from the capital with medicine to fight the plague, he admits to seeing "terrifying proof" of vampires.

When we get into the nitty-gritty of Kinberg's script, ingenues Anton (John Moulder Brown) and Dora (recently deceased Lynne Frederick, who had been Peter Sellers widow) learn that circus panther-man Emil (Anthony Corlan) is a kinsman of Mitterhouse. Determined to see his cousin resurrected, he'd like nothing better than to use all the village children to bring the vampire's curse to fruition. After the circus performers entertain the citizens each evening, innocent children and women are led to their deaths by the vampire clan. Robert Young's direction offers a multitude of surrealistic visions: aerial performers who change into bats (Robin Sachs and Lala Ward); a dwarf (Skip Martin) whose hideous mask is peeled back to reveal an equally hideous face; and a silent strongman (Dave Prowse) who plays an ancient musical box with the weirdest melody ever heard in a Hammer film.

Robert Tayman shines (albeit briefly), and Anthony Corlan brings new meaning to the word demonic. Corlan's portrayal of Paul Paxton in Peter Sasdy's memorable TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA (1970) was as close to the classic Hammer hero as anyone could get. His totally unexpected turn as Emil boasts a farther-ranging talent than anyone might have suspected. It's a shame he didn't work for the company more often.



Count Mitterhouse (Robert Tayman) rises from the grave at the film's climax, though only for a moment.

Every last dastardly villain of the Circus of Nights suffers some major pain during the film's slaughterhouse finale, which leaves the viewer feeling woozy from all the biting, staking, maiming, and killing. Mitterhouse, at last freed from his tomb, menaces the young hero and heroine—for less than one minute!—before joining his fellow fiends in vampire purgatory. This anticlimax has been the subject of what little discussion VAMPIRE CIRCUS has enjoyed among fans. Since the whole purpose of the plot is to resurrect the Count while bringing about the downfall of Stetl, it's some what disconcerting to watch him dispatched by a conveniently placed crossbow less than 60 seconds after he has reclaimed his (un)life! Whether due to circumstances, a tight budget or short shooting schedule—or if Kinberg's script was simply written that way—Mitterhouse's gory death flies by in the beat of a bat's wing. (U.S. distributor 20th Century Fox shortened the sequence even further, and on television, forget it.)

Abrupt conclusion notwithstanding, VAMPIRE CIRCUS is one of the most memorable movies of the Hammer cycle. The combination of classic Hammer horror with hallucinatory surrealism infused the film with a truly offbeat sense of wonder. Fans accustomed to typical horrors weren't quite sure what to make of it, but almost everyone agreed on one thing: the film delivered everything you would normally expect from those British merrymakers of the macabre—and a whole lot more besides. □

THE SCORE

By Randall Larson

COMPOSERS OF THE NIGHT

What music they make!

As horror films developed from German expressionism of the '20s into monster movies of the '30s and mutant creatures of the '50s, up through alluringly diabolical predators of the '70s and '80s, film music has likewise developed from 19th century romantic/operatic styles to neo-electronic experimentations, pop and jazz rhythms to large-form and fully-integrated scores for orchestra, synths, and digital computerized instruments. Music for vampire films has similarly developed from horrific dissonances to romantic sensuality and even mythical, quasi-heroic orchestrations.

In 1922, with F.W. Murnau's unauthorized *Dracula* adaptation, NOSFERATU, the vampire film score was born. German composer Hans Erdmann provided slow, sparse orchestrations to accompany Murnau's understated expressionism. Erdmann's score was distributed on sheet music along with the film, to be performed by an orchestra or organist at the theater. Ten years later, Wolfgang Zeller composed a brooding, soft-spoken score for Carl Dreyer's VAMPYR (1931).

The same year in America, Tod Browning's DRACULA opened with virtually no music except a rendition of Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake" under the main titles. This piece, as well as two classical excerpts during the concert hall scene, were selected and arranged by Heinz Roemheld, head of Universal's music department. Roemheld went on to compose one of the most extravagant scores of the decade, DRACULA'S DAUGHTER (1936), which musically underlined the tragic poignancy of the woman afflicted with vampirism, while suggesting the unseen Dracula (and the ancestral curse he represents) through an ominous motif introduced during the main titles.

THE VAMPIRE BAT (1933) was one of many "poverty-row" horror films that selected cues from a music library. Abe Meyer was one of the self-employed music directors who made a living compiling scores from various public-domain or licensed compositions. For THE VAMPIRE BAT he concocted a melodramatic score around a widely-used *misterioso* composed by Charles Dunworth and Jean de la Roche, edited together with other snippets (spooky interludes, romantic themes, chase rhythms, etc). Similar music-service scores included David Chudnow's THE DEVIL BAT (1941) and Richard Cherwin's THE VAMPIRE'S GHOST (1945).

Hammer's DRACULA series began with a great score by James Bernard. By the time of DRACULA A.D. 1972, the music had degenerated along with the plots.

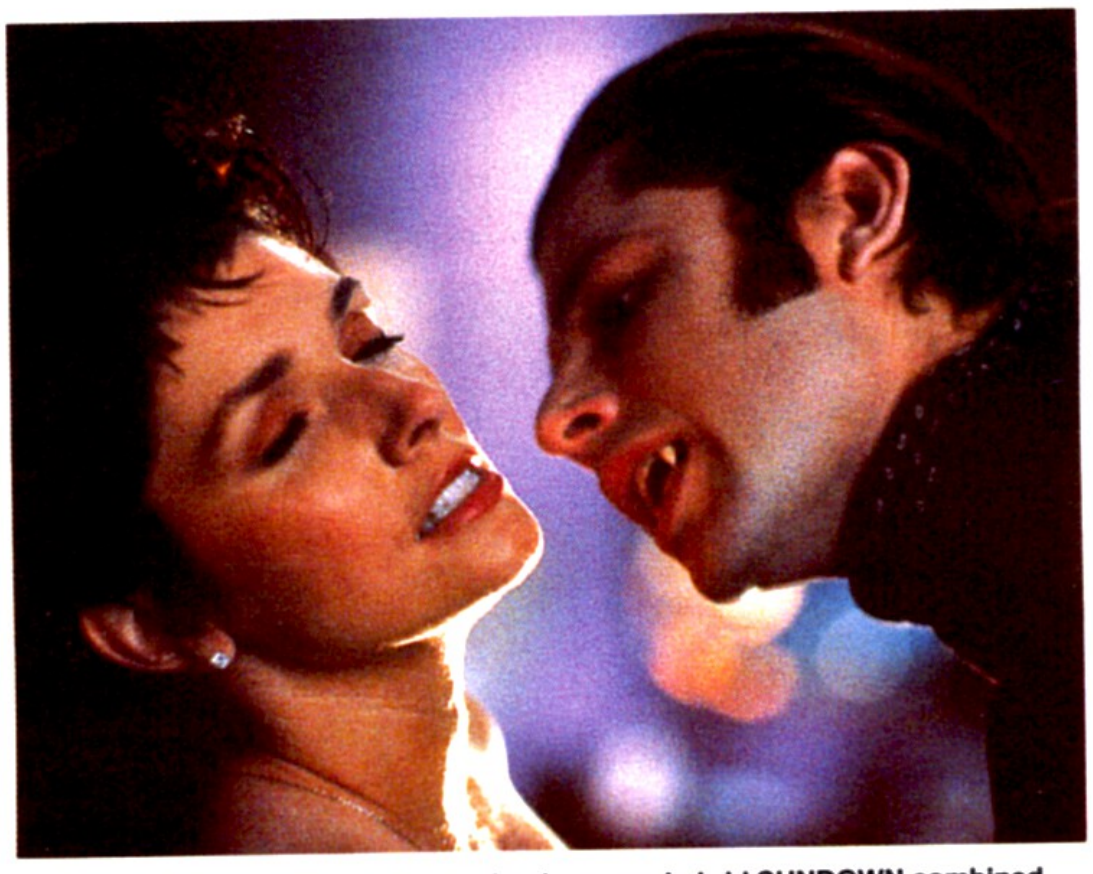
MGM's THE RETURN OF THE VAMPIRE (1943) received probably the classiest score of the '40s, written by respected composer Mario Castelnuovo-Tedesco, who did a number of Hollywood films in the '40s and '50s as a sideline to his concert compositions. Universal's SON OF DRACULA (1943) featured rousing horror music by staff composers Frank Skinner, Hans Salter, and Charles Previn. This collaborative effort wasn't unusual. Universal operated its music department like an assembly line. Under the supervision of Music Director Joseph Gershenson, composers like Skinner and Salter—the studio's premiere horror music makers—would be assigned certain reels of a film, and each would utilize the other's themes, as dictated by the needs of their sequence.

The scores they created defined horror music of the decade. Harsh, dissonant marches for brass and percussion, solo violin interludes, spooky flute filigrees, low, brassy chords, and pounding timpani accompanied each terrifying monster attack, echoing the feelings of the cowering victims. Often, cues were reused in subsequent films, occasionally re-orchestrated, more often

simply inserted from the music library. The finale music for SON OF DRACULA had been composed by Skinner for THE INVISIBLE MAN RETURNS; Salter added a violin filigree to lend a bittersweet feeling and used it in the denouement of SON.

When Dracula reappeared in HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1944) and HOUSE OF DRACULA (1945), he was accompanied by no less than eight composers: Skinner, Salter, Previn, Paul Dessau, William Lava, Paul Sawtell, Charles Henderson and Edgar Fairchild (though of course only Gershenson received on screen credit). While HOUSE OF DRACULA was mostly library tracks, Salter provided some new music—notably a sequence in which the heroine is playing Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata* on a piano when Dracula enters the room and begins to mesmerize her. Subtly, the piano melody segues into a moody piece based on the Dracula theme which takes over until the girl grabs a crucifix, thwarting Dracula's influence. *Moonlight Sonata* returns as he flees from the room.

After the science-fiction phase of the 1950's, BLOOD OF DRACULA (1957) ushered in a bloody new tide of vampire films that has remained constant ever since. Its effective musical score was composed by Paul Dunlap, who had made an impressive debut in the genre that same year with I WAS A TEENAGE FRANKENSTEIN and I WAS A TEENAGE WEREWOLF. Gerald Fried (STAR TREK, ROOTS)



Richard Stone's excellent music for the genre hybrid SUNDOWN combined elements from American and Italian Westerns as well as British horror movies.

composed MARK OF THE VAMPIRE and THE RETURN OF DRACULA (both 1958) early in his career. The latter is one of the best vampire scores of the late '50s, featuring a driving theme for throbbing horns over strident strong chords, the melodic line derived from the Catholic Mass for the Dead, *Dies Irae*, (Day of Wrath, a plainsong melody that would find its way into dozens of horror scores), which represents the diabolical Count. The score is a noteworthy example of the ability of music to instill a sense of terror through the use of a repeated phrase, or *ostinato*, that is associated with the film's monster. JAWS would imitate its kind of effectiveness 17 years later.

Another notable score was for the unusual vampire Western, THE CURSE OF THE UNDEAD (1959), composed by Irving Gertz, a Universal music staffer who also provided music for THE MONOLITH MONSTERS and THE LEECH WOMAN. Ronald Stein, who superbly scored dozens of low-budget, low-talent SF and horror films in the '50s and '60s (IT CONQUERED THE WORLD, INVASION OF THE SAUCER MEN) found his music recycled and credited to a pen-name, "Leonard Morand," in 1965's TRACK OF THE VAMPIRE and QUEEN OF BLOOD.

When Hammer released HORROR OF DRACULA in 1958, English composer James Bernard provided the same kind of visceral, dynamic punch with which the studio jolted the genre, and his terrific music quickly became the apotheosis of horror scoring of the '60s and '70s. The thunderous, immensely powerful score is dominated by a repeated, 3-note descending motif for brass doubled by timpani, drawn from the syllables of the vampire's name ("*DRAC-u-la*"). Bernard balances this theme, which represents vampiric evil, with an emotionally weaker motif associated with Van Helsing. These two themes interact throughout the film in a musical battle of good versus evil, with the Dracula theme constantly overpowering the Van Helsing theme until the end, when the Dracula motif is broken up and dissipated into a single cymbal crash as the vampire disintegrates into dust in the morning sunlight, the "good" theme swelling triumphantly.

Bernard built on this theme in all six of his Dracula movies, including the kung-fu, vampire combo, LEGEND OF THE 7 GOLDEN VAMPIRES (1973). Playing alternate themes against them, like the gorgeously romantic melodies in SCARS OF DRACULA (1970) and TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA (1970), effectively counterpointed the dark vampire theme while accentuating the sensuality of these pictures. Bernard also scored KISS OF THE VAMPIRE (1961).

A similar mixture of bombastic wildness and seductive melody was taken by Harry Robertson (a.k.a. Robinson) when he scored Hammer's sexy Carmilla trilogy (THE VAMPIRE LOVERS, LUST FOR A VAMPIRE and TWINS OF EVIL [1970-71]) and COUNTESS DRACULA (1972). Robertson provided richly Gothic music as dynamic and powerful as Bernard's, underscoring the action with melodies as alluring as the nubile vampiresses who stalked the films.

Hammer's VAMPIRE CIRCUS (1972) featured excellent, dramatic music by David Whittaker (DR. JEKYLL AND SISTER HYDE). Whittaker underlined the film's magical tone and tempo, invoking a carnival-like flavor through use of cathedral organ. But the score maintains a consistent darkness through progressive low-register chords and mysterious dissonances.

On the other hand, the trendy DRACULA A.D. 1972 featured grating, counter-productive pop-jazz rhythmatics by rock musician Michael Vickers. The music hardly congealed enough to support the film's dramatic requirements, providing instead only an ill-suited foundry rhythm with no connection to the action or characters. THE SATANIC RITES OF DRACULA (1974) featured a similar tone, though American composer John Cacavas managed to keep the music well enough on track to maintain a notable symphonic sensibility, only occasionally reverting to obnoxious pop rhythms.

Hammer's CAPTAIN KRONOS, VAMPIRE HUNTER (1974) was scored by notable British composer Laurie Johnson, who provided a loud, brassy, pounding theme that drove the rousing music along at a relentless pace, relieved only by occasional quiet, swirling tones from harp and woodwinds.

Italian filmmakers jumped on the bandwagon, pumping out dozens of minor vampire movies from the peculiar (UNCLE WAS A VAMPIRE, 1959, music by Armando Trovajoli) and the profound (BLACK SUNDAY, 1960, Roberto Nicolosi) to the unusual (THE VAMPIRE AND THE BALLERINA, CURSE OF THE BLOOD GHOULS, both 1962, Alda

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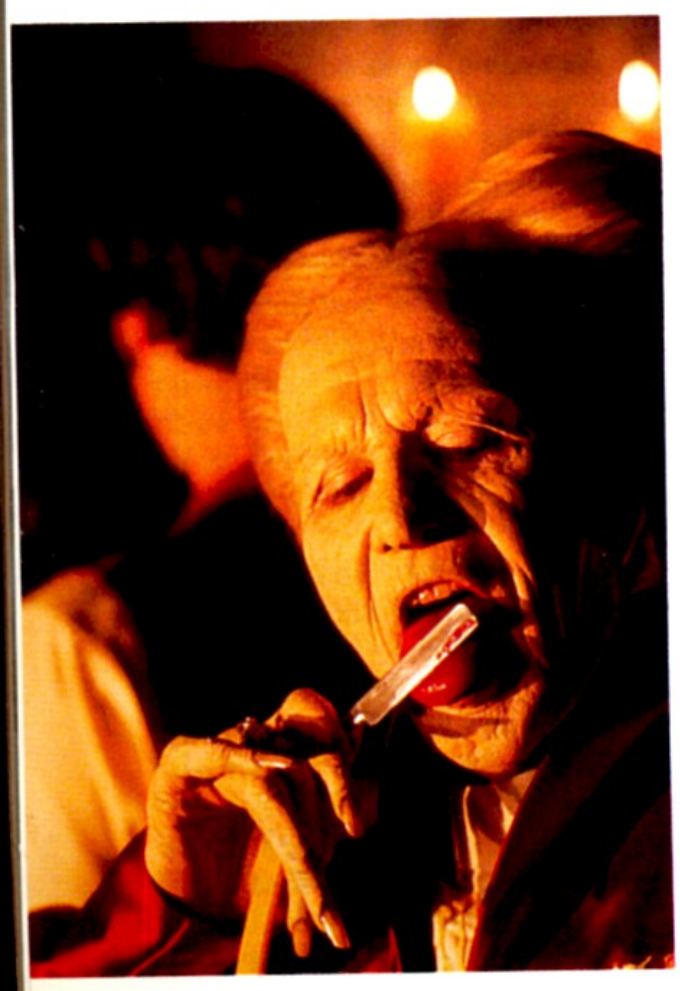
Wojciech Kilar provided a rich score which supported the visual style of BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA.



TO SLEEP WITH A VAMPIRE, scored by Nigel Holton, borrowed Anne Rice's concept of Those Who Want to Die. In this case, the vampire's chosen victim is Charlie Spradling's suicidal dancer.

CINEMA
By Steve Biodrowski

RECENT RELEASES
Lions, Shadows, and Wolves—oh, my!

WOLF is probably the first werewolf story since Guy Endore's novel *The Werewolf of Paris* (and definitely the first werewolf film ever) to place its lycanthropic tale within a social context that lends some kind of relevance and resonance beyond "look at the poor, doomed sap." Whereas *Paris* was an extended metaphor of the political violence and upheaval in Napoleonic France, WOLF is an apocalyptic look at modern society as seen through the macrocosm of the New York publishing world.

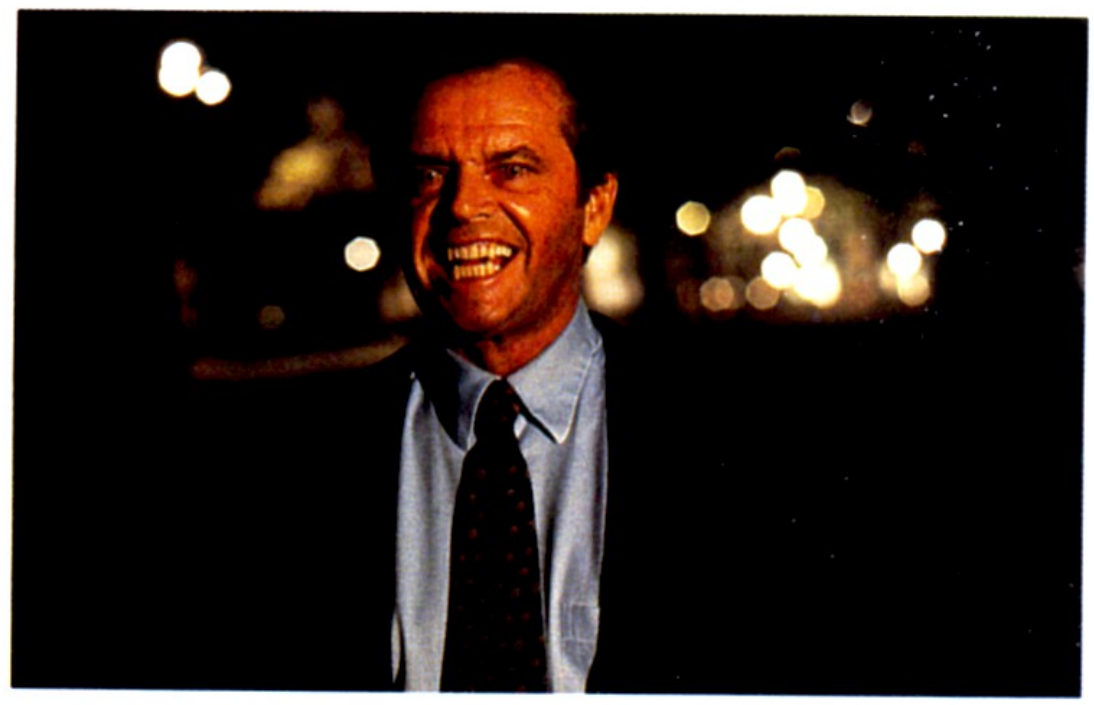
The basic premise is ripe for satire, which director Mike Nichols (with an assist from uncredited screenwriter Elaine May) plucks quite neatly: Jack Nicholson's Will Randel is apparently the world's last civilized man, which makes him (like Phillip Marlowe in author Raymond Chandler's own estimation) a failure through no fault of his own, because his skills and qualities are simply not valued by the society in which he lives. But when he starts taking on wolfish characteristics, his survival instincts kick in, and suddenly it seems he will be the leader of the pack. ("If I'd know you were this ruthless, I never would have fired you in the first place," says Christopher Plummer's oily millionaire, while giving back Randel his job, along with a healthy raise.)

Unfortunately, the filmmakers did not see fit to carry the premise through to its logical conclusion. In the latter half, the film feels an obligation to deliver the typical horror goods, including a confrontation with a rival werewolf. It's actually all pretty good fun and reasonably entertaining, but it is disappointing. Certainly the better way to have gone would have been to make WOLF the publishing world's equivalent of THE PLAYER (or the horror movie equivalent of A SHOCK TO THE SYSTEM, if you prefer). The ending should have seen Randel killing all his enemies and rising to the top of the corporate empire, while at the same time losing all of the decent qualities that made us like him in the first place. Now that would have been funny and tragic.

When I saw THE MASK in rough cut months ago, I knew it was going to be a colossal late-summer sleeper for New LIne, so I eagerly awaited the finished product. Sad to say, it didn't quite live up to expectations. Jim Carrey's and ILM's effects do deliver the manic Tex Avery-style antics, but they're trapped within the context of a rather overly sentimental fable, which tells us basically, "Just be yourself, and everything will be all right."

The problem with this moral is that the early scenes establish Carrey's Ipkiss as an unsympathetic worm of a character, who participates in his own humiliation by not only allowing but basically inviting everyone to walk all over him. No matter what the film tries to tell us, what it shows us is clear: finding the mask was the best thing that ever happened to this guy, and without it, we wouldn't be the least interested in him. As a result, the conclusion, in which Ipkiss must try to defeat the villains without the mask, is a somewhat miscalculated anticlimax; and the denouement, in which he throws the mask away, is entirely unconvincing. We know he'll be wearing the mask again for a sequel, and we can only hope the filmmakers give up the sentiment and concentrate entirely on the delightful elements that made this such a crowd-pleaser in spite of the flaws mentioned here.

THE LION KING continues Disney's apparently unbreakable streak of blockbuster animation epics. What's truly surprising is that this managed to out-perform ALADDIN, even without the box office appeal of Robin Williams. It's also the better of the two films, although not quite up to the current standard set by THE LITTLE MERMAID and BEAUTY AND THE BEAST. If anything, this proves the value of occasionally being politically correct: afraid of portraying weakness in female characters, the company actually produced two reasonably strong protagonists in Ariel and Belle. But with Aladdin and Simba, they took a step back toward the wishy-washy leads we used to expect. (Am I the only one to notice that both characters acquire whatever moral strength they have from their love interests, who inspire them to take what they should have known on their own was the right course of action?) In any case, the film overcomes its weaknesses with a brilliant combination of animation and music, not to mention a gallery of fine vocal performances. On top of that, it uses its animal cast to touch a mythic nerve that might have been out of reach with human characters. And you've gotta love a film that could elicit such knee-jerk reactions from the left-wing alternative press ("What about the patriarchy?" whines the *L.A. Weekly* and, in a pathetic display of nonreasoning, accuses the film of endorsing a value system responsible for Nicole Simpson's murder! Oh well, it's always easy to blame the media, no matter what side of the political spectrum you're on.)



The hair of the dog that bit him: Jack Nicholson's Will Randel receives unexpected benefits from a wolf bite that awakens his survival instincts.

After the amount of money they lost on THE SHADOW, I'd feel sorry for Universal, except that anyone who hires Russell Mulcahy deserves whatever they get. David Koepp's script is surprisingly weak, to begin with (perhaps he should reteam with his DEATH BECOMES HER collaborator Martin Donovan), but Mulcahy's directorial flourishes exacerbate the problems. When endless rounds of bullets start flying in the first New York scene, we're left wondering, "Where's the mystery and menace of the Shadow character?" Clearly, the director was not going to let such considerations stand in the way of the flashing Tommy gun. This sets the tone for the rest of the film: techniques will always be chosen on the basis of looking flashy, whether or not they produce the desired effect on the audience. As I've pointed out before, there's nothing wrong with lots of fancy technique, but one should make some effort to chose the right technique that enhances the sequence at hand. Speaking of which, another noted visual director, Tim Burton, has just completed one of his best films, which weaves technique and style into a coherent vision in a way that Mulcahy will probably never manage. But more on ED WOOD next issue. □

Jim Carrey's performance, with assists from Greg Cannom's makeup and ILM's effects, provides the manic lunacy that made THE MASK such a hit.

BEYOND BELA: John Carradine on filling Lugosi's Dracula cape.

By David Del Valle

This interview was conducted late in the evening of November 10, 1984, at John Carradine's Montecito, California residence. Mr. Carradine had graciously agreed to appear on my cable talk show, SINISTER IMAGE, and I suggested we have a meeting to run through some questions about his horror films, particularly taking over the role of Dracula at Universal. Sadly, John never did appear on my show, as he had accepted film offers which conflicted with my taping dates. Luckily, we have this interview with a classic Dracula, the late, great John Carradine.

Carradine managed to maintain some good-humored dignity as the Count in the otherwise lackluster disco-vampire movie, NOCTURNA.

JC: I knew Bela quite well. He was a very cultured man. I knew him best at Monogram in the 1940s in movies we'd all like to forget. But I feel as he was a proud man, these films were beneath him. Bela would keep a big decanter of red wine in his dressing room, and I would always decline to drink with him until we were finished for the day. I never drank when I was working. John Barrymore had taught me the folly of that.

DDV: Did you know that John Barrymore was considered for DRACULA before Lugosi?

JC: Amazingly, not. Jack could do anything, you know. He would have been magnificent. Jack Barrymore was a voracious reader, an artist, a true genius. One can safely imagine Barrymore saw the potential of a character like Dracula. Look at his film of SVENGALI if you want to envision Barrymore as Dracula. He adored makeup, anything to get away from that damned profile of his. Had this occurred, there might not have been a Boris or Bela.

DDV: In HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN you became the next actor at Universal to portray Dracula.

JC: I had been touring at the time with my Shakespeare players when I found out I was cast as Dracula. It was my understanding that Bela Lugosi had declined the part because he was working for other studios like Monogram and RKO, as was I.

DDV: Some speculate that Boris Karloff's being the star might have been a factor.

JC: Oh no, work is work. Bela got on fine professionally with Boris. They had distinctly different personalities. Bela was very proud of his Dracula, and I'm sure he would have played it no matter who his co-stars were. Knowing Universal, they were probably aware of Lugosi's schedule and took advantage of that. I don't remember reading for the part, but I do remember a screen test just to see how I'd look.

DDV: How did you approach the role?

JC: I had read *Dracula* as a boy, and it scared the hell out of me. Years later, I saw the movie with Lugosi. He gave Dracula his own personality, but it was not worthy of the novel. My attitude would be definitely Shakespearian, with a nod to RICHARD III. Dracula is a tragic figure—a monarch of the undead, in some respects like Lear, his kingdom gone, forced to live among inferiors, an outcast. Many of my own ideas...I wore the top hat at an angle, because this man could afford to be debonair. I used my eyes like weapons. Dracula could, of course, bend one's will to his own. I kept my moustache, like in the novel. He kept a beard at one point, which they wouldn't let me do.

DDV: You played the role again in 1945.

JC: Yes, HOUSE OF DRACULA. And I played him on stage several times over the years. And on radio. And before you bring it up, the worst film I think I ever did, BILLY THE KID VS. DRACULA.

DDV: What do you remember about HOUSE OF DRACULA?

JC: It was a very quickly done picture. HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN made a hell of a lot of money for Universal, and I believe they approached me before anyone else to do Dracula, as now I'd established the part, but alas I came to the series too late. There was a kind of sadness about this shoot. I think Lon Chaney knew this was the end. I enjoyed myself because my makeup was modest—easier than poor Onslow Stevens or Chaney. To this day, I sign more photographs from those two pictures, at least to the horror contingent.

DDV: Have you ever seen Christopher Lee's Dracula?

JC: Yes, in fact I have just done a picture with Christopher, called HOUSE OF THE LONG SHADOWS. Those English films are entertaining, and I admire Christopher's panther-like ferocity, but that is not Stoker, not by a mile.

DDV: What was your last Dracula on film?

JC: I think it was DRACULA'S GRANDDAUGHTER [released as NOCTURNA]. That young woman who produced the film [Nai Bonet] had been a successful stripper and wanted me to be Dracula for her first feature. It was to be the first DRACULA film with disco. I suspect she wanted something along the lines of the George Hamilton Dracula [LOVE AT FIRST BITE]. Historically, I must be the first vampire to remove my fangs, dental plate and all! Yvonne De Carlo and I joked around that we were having what can only be described as "coffin sex."

DDV: Next to Dracula, I really admire your performance as Bluebeard. Would it be safe to assume those are your favorite

Unlike the clipped, British-looking mustache of his Universal Dracula, when playing the Count on stage Carradine adopted the long, curling whiskers described by Stoker.

villains?

JC: My best film work will always be the preacher in GRAPES OF WRATH. My favorite villain is Shakespeare's Richard III. In reference to horror films, then it would be BLUEBEARD. Sadly, I never got to play Count Dracula as he should have been played, following Stoker's blueprint for the role. The great film has yet to be made. □

In NOCTURNA, Carradine and Yvonne DeCarlo had what they described as "coffin sex."

LASERBLAST

by David Del Valle

TWO FULL HOUSES: Universal's monster rallies.

The release of the double feature disk of HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN and HOUSE OF DRACULA is a joyous occasion for devotees of classic macabre movies. Presented with a beautiful jacket and gatefold, resplendent with poster art and stills, Universal/MCA has given these titles the A-treatment in all respects. The transfers and crisp and sharp; the audio track is clear and allows one to enjoy the surging score, and the supplemental features include trailers and production photographs for both films.

In discussing the two HOUSE films, it is of historical significance that John Carradine became the third actor at Universal to don the cape of Count Dracula. In fact, Carradine's reputation is solidified by seeing these films back to back. Unlike Lugosi or his immediate predecessor, Lon Chaney Jr. (as Dracula's son), Carradine's Count is a lean, cadaverous character. In keeping with his stage background, he opts for a Shakespearian interpretation of the role, and his Dracula seems much more ethereal, truly a man who has returned from the other side of the grave and knows (as Leonard Wolf points out in *A Dream of Dracula*) "what dreams may come we have shuffled off this mortal coil." His influence on women has a curiously hypnotic sexual power, as they gaze into his eyes or his signet ring. It is a warm, shadowy world that they glimpse, and they are strangely attracted to the man and his undead domain.

The major flaw of the first film is that Dracula is dispatched much to soon, giving Chaney's Lawrence Talbot far too much time to lament his lycanthropic condition while waiting for Karloff's Dr. Nieman to do some kind of cure (which never in fact materializes). Logic was stretched to its limits as Curt Siodmak's treatment tried to fulfill Universal's wish to incorporate as many monsters as possible. One can only be thankful that the Mummy was dropped at the last minute.

HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN, originally called THE DEVIL'S BROOD, was among Universal's first million-dollar productions, and part of the money went to pay Karloff's post-*Arsenic and Old Lace* salary. The appearance of Frankenstein's monster in each effort is brief window dressing, and although Karloff himself coached Glenn Strange in the part, the magic did not transfer. J. Carrol Naish's performance as Karloff's hunchbacked assistant is a standout, giving HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN a sense of pathos. Like Carradine, George Zucco is also dispatched too quickly, but his Professor Lampini is fondly remembered by fans.

Although virtually a remake of its predecessor, HOUSE OF DRACULA is somewhat of an improvement: the production values are not as lavish, but the script is more coherent, and the structure is faster paced. Also, one is not bogged down with howlers like Dr. Nieman genuinely perplexed as to why he was imprisoned for trying to implant the brain of a human into the skull of a dog. Carradine is given much more screen time as the Count; superb character actor Onslow Stevens gives a bravura performance as the doctor tainted with Dracula's blood; and John P. Fulton's effects for the doctor's dream sequence gives a nicely nightmarish glimpse into Dracula's world. □

In his two portrayals for Universal, HOUSE OF FRANKENSTEIN and HOUSE OF DRACULA, Carradine lent a much more unearthly quality to Dracula.

John Williams' fine DRACULA score opted for a romantic, operatic tone in keeping with Langella's performance.

Piga), and from the futuristic (ATOM AGE VAMPIRE, 1960, Trovajoli; PLANET OF THE VAMPIRES, 1965, Gino Marinuzzi) to the ridiculous (GOLIATH AND THE VAMPIRES, 1962, Angelo Francesco Lavagnino). The Italian film composers tended to be a little more modern, often drawing on unusual instrumentation and electronics as well as pop and jazz styles, while American films were fairly traditionally at this point. When these films were released in the USA, many scores were replaced with more traditional sounding music by composers such as Les Baxter at AIP.

Jesse Franco's COUNT DRACULA (Italy, 1971) contained highly effective music by Bruno Nicolai, who achieved a claustrophobic eeriness with a repetitive, unresolved melody for zimbalom, along with bizarre, wolflike wails to accompany the vampire attacks. Romanian composer Christopher Komeda (ROSEMARY'S BABY) provided an evocative score for Polanski's THE FEARLESS VAMPIRE KILLERS (1967), utilizing male chorus chanting a somber melody over rapid, higher female

Brad Fiedel lent an effective synth score to FRIGHT NIGHT I and II.

chorale notes, with jangly keyboard and electric bass guitar, all of which built an effective contemporary-sounding ominousness.

Composers like Raul Lavista, Luis Hernandez Breton and Gustavo Cesar Carrion plied their trade in the low budget horrors that began to emerge from south of the border. Carrion was Mexico's leading horror composer, providing serviceable music for such films as EL VAMPIRO (1958) and the NOSTRADAMUS series. Carrion re-used motifs from EL VAMPIRO, slightly jazzed up, in SANTO & THE BLUE DEMON VS DRACULA & THE WOLF MAN (1972). Raul Lavista scored SANTO VS THE VAMPIRE WOMEN (1963) with old-fashioned serial-like music which could have been lifted straight out of FLASH GORDON. Luis Hernandez Breton's strange, melodramatic score for INVASION OF THE VAMPIRES (1963) featured soft, melodic choir and low, deep violin patterns that lent an effective, otherworldly tonality.

A new kind of vampire appeared in 1966 when the daytime soap opera DARK SHADOWS premiered. Composer Bob Cobert provided about 20 hours of individual cues, which were put into a music library and liberally sprinkled throughout the series. Cobert also scored the contemporary vampire telefilm, THE NIGHT STALKER (1972), giving it a modern, Las Vegas sound. When Jack Palance donned the cape in the 1972 TV DRACULA, Cobert composed a soaring, romantic violin theme that accentuated the passion of the vampire, while lending a sense of terrific drama to the horrifying sequences.

Vampires were emerging like hungry bats in the '70s, with music as diverse as their approach to the subject: CURSE OF THE VAMPIRE (Filipino, 1970: Tito Arevalo), LAKE OF DRACULA (Japan, 1970: Riichiro Manabe), THE VELVET VAMPIRE (USA, 1971: Clancy B. Grass III), THE WEREWOLF VS THE VAMPIRE WOMAN (Spain, 1972: Anton Garcia Abril), THE NUDE VAMPIRE (France, 1969: Franco Tusques & Yvon Gerard), THE VAMPIRE HAPPENING (W Germany, 1971: Jerry Van Rooyen), THE VAMPIRE AND SEX (Mexico, 1968: Sergio Guerrero), CEMETERY GIRLS (Italy, 1973: Carmelo Bernaola), SON OF DRACULA (England, 1974: Harry Nilsson), VAMPIRE HOOKERS (USA, 1978: Jaime Mendoza-Nava), DRACULA'S DOG (England, 1979: Andrew Belling), and THE BLACK VAMPIRE (Argentina, 1981: Juan Ehlert)—they ran the gamut from sympho-pop to rock & roll to brooding, spooky atmospheres. The advent of synthesizers and related musical computers led to new sounds and colorations within the traditional orchestral pallet, which had a notable effect on horror film music.

Veteran composer William Lava's last score was DRACULA VS FRANKENSTEIN (1971), harkening back to his classic scores for THE INVISIBLE MAN'S REVENGE and television's TWILIGHT ZONE. Paul Ferris (whose original score for WITCHFINDER GENERAL remains one of the genre's best) scored THE VAMPIRE BEAST CRAVES BLOOD in 1969. Goremaster H. G. Lewis' entry into modern-day vampire lore, A TASTE FOR BLOOD (1967), contained a loud, obnoxious score by Larry Wellington. Soul music made its horror film debut in BLACULA (1972) and SCREAM, BLACULA, SCREAM (1973), both by Bill Marx, who had also scored COUNT YORGA, VAMPIRE (1970) and its sequel.

Werner Herzog's remake of NOSFERATU (1979) featured ambient music by German pop group Popol Vuh, lending a repetitive, mantra-like quality through its quiet and droning assemblage of sitar, keyboard, and voice. The style seemed to match Herzog's slow, hypnotic pacing. Donald Rubinstein scored George Romero's psychological vampire thriller, MARTIN (1977) with a variety of discordant harmonies, occasional electronics, and a haunting use of solo female voice over piano. Harry Sukman scored the miniseries SALEM'S LOT (1979) with plenty of orchestral and electronic atmosphere, featuring an effective, rapid, low brass arrangement of the *Dies Irae*.

Since 1977, symphonic scoring has made a strong resurgence, as filmmakers once again realize the ability of the orchestra to make an emotional tie between audience and screen. STAR WARS composer John Williams tackled the horror genre in 1979, lending John Badham's DRACULA a 19th century Gothic romantic score that invested the film with a poignancy and lyricism underlying even its dramatic and terrifying moments, while at the same time musically personifying the power, passion, and horror of Dracula.

Charles Bernstein's music for the comedic LOVE AT FIRST BITE (1979) was at odds with the disco music forced onto the film, but his score contained a neat solo violin melody akin to the old Universal-Dracula music of Salter and Skinner. The contemporary vampire film, THE HUNGER (1983), was given a classy and delicate score by Michel Rubini and Denny Jaeger, musically portraying the elegant decadence of the vampire couple. The film also utilized classical music to very good effect.

1985 launched a number of youth-oriented vampire films, emphasizing humor and gory special effects. Brad Fiedel (THE TERMINATOR) skirted FRIGHT NIGHT's obligatory rock songs with an effective synth score, ambient and rhythmic, mirroring the film's strange and sexy mood with expressionistic, sinewy music. Fiedel repeated the act in 1989 with FRIGHT NIGHT II.

James Bernard's 3-note motif for Christopher Lee's Dracula is one of the most memorable in genre music.

Lee Holdridge composed TRANSYLVANIA 6-5000 (1985) with a clever mix of swing, pop and classical orchestrations, nicely supporting the film's divergent styles. Chuck Cirino's music for TRANSYLVANIA TWIST (1989) was similarly loony, providing a varied and supporting score for this campy horror satire. Thomas Newman's score for THE LOST BOYS (1987) mixed modern rhythms with effectively spooky tonalities. Television composer Steve Dorff (CHEERS, TAXI) scored MY BEST FRIEND IS A VAMPIRE (1988) with upbeat, tuneful music.

VAMP (1986) contained ambient, eerie music by Jonathan Elias, while Bruce Broughton gave the THE MONSTER SQUAD (1987), with its nostalgic reunion of classic monsters, including Dracula, an adventurously romantic symphonic score. The electronic group Tangerine Dream lent NEAR DARK (1987) a brooding, claustrophobic and inescapable sound design, reflecting the film's effective depiction of of newborn vampirism. Cliff Eidelman (STAR TREK IV) scored TO DIE FOR (1989) primarily for

COMPANY OF WOLVES' George Fenton will also provide music for INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE.

synthesizers, lending a rich and evocative electronic ambience. Richard Stone's excellent music for the vampire Western, SUNDOWN (1989), was a broad, expressive symph/synth score, that incorporated a striking amalgamation of styles drawn from American and Italian Western music, as well as British horror music.

Polish composer Wojciech Kilar provided a thickly textured score for Francis Ford Coppola's lavish and haunting BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA (1992), supporting the expressive visual style with equally interesting and expressionistic music utilizing chanting choruses, intimate romantic themes, and a dynamic, hypnotic motif for Dracula. Fred Mollin (FRIDAY THE 13TH, THE SERIES) scored the TV series FOREVER KNIGHT (1992) for piano and synthesizer, giving this predominantly action-oriented series a great deal of musical variation and feeling.

Former orchestrator Mark McKenzie made a strong composer's debut with SON OF DARKNESS: TO DIE FOR II (1992), giving the film a furious, grandly dynamic score for orchestra integrated with electronics. Carter Burwell (BLOOD SIMPLE) lent his unusual, eclectic style to BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER (1992) while Ira Newborn (POLICE SQUAD) composed INNOCENT BLOOD (1992), and Nigel Holton scored TO SLEEP WITH A VAMPIRE (1993).

Finally, we have INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE, scored by George Fenton, whose earlier music for A COMPANY OF WOLVES provided the horror genre with one of its richest and most poetic, classically-styled scores. Fenton lends a fluid elegance and a symphonic grace, capping 70 years of vampire music and, in a sense, returning to its classical roots. INTERVIEW may be a far cry from NOSFERATU, stylistically, but the essence of the vampire remains the same. Vampire film music has likewise encompassed dozens of diverse musical styles and various degrees of effectiveness. □

NEW AGE EVIL

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LW: In any case, it doesn't matter, because what we are now dealing with are two myths that have become firmly established not only in American culture but pretty much in Western culture. Myth keeps generating images of itself. That's what the films will do, and that's what the novelistic rip-offs will do.

DS: Sure. I think they really are two of the major mythic constructs of the last couple centuries, and they've largely been ignored.

LW: Come on, you and I have done our best to un-ignore the world!

DS: Only in the last two decades.

LW: But we're winning, David.

DS: There *were* times when you couldn't find film books that would even index titles like DRACULA and FRANKENSTEIN. They were considered beneath contempt.

LW: If you look at the academic output on them in the last 30 years, it's more than this scholar can damned near deal with!

DS: It really is a bottomless well of cultural meaning. For my new book, *V is for Vampire,* I had to do check lists of films and novels. Finally, you have to throw up your hands and say, 'This is as complete as it's going to get!' I watched something like 200 vampire movies. After awhile, I was using the fast forward quite a bit. The important thing is not whether it's junk or not, but the fact that the vampire image has so permeated the popular culture and the popular consciousness that the character of Dracula or a generic vampire is as familiar as Santa Claus or Mickey Mouse. Everyone knows what it is, even if they're never read the book or seen the film. Even if they're unfamiliar with Lugosi, little kids can do a fairly close impersonation of his voice because they've heard it imitated by someone else who was imitating someone else. □

ADVOCATES

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have to convince me that he's a 4000-year-old aristocrat. I've said if I could have any actor from any period, I would want James Mason, circa 1956.

SMC: Jeremy Irons would be just right. He has that spectral look. He looks basically unhappy, and most people don't think of vampires as jolly. He gives off those vibes of being removed a certain degree, of standing back. I know if Rice didn't get him, I'd love to get him! That's probably not in the cards, because *Tapestry* is not the kind of megabestseller that *Interview* has been.

IM: If you'll forgive a brief comparison to Anne Rice, I find it interesting that the three of you are all working in this sub-genre, but apart from the fact that you're avoiding the traditional Stoker image, you have very little in common.

SMC: People pretty quickly began to try to push outside the boundaries of what became established cliches. The more you push and the wider you spread the definition of what a vampire is, the more different ways there are to go with it. So we have discovered these veins, as it were, and exploited them, quite successfully in some cases. There's a very broad spectrum—it's kind of a sub-sub-sub-genre at this point, all makes and sizes. □

LETTERS

NO TEARS FOR MST-3K:TMP
Enclosed find two letters we sent to Casey Silver at Universal and to Best Brains Productions:

Dear Mr. Silver,
We applaud your decision to drop the MYSTERY SCIENCE THEATER 3000 film. All of us at our store cannot stand the show and feel a feature would be a total waste of time, money, and energy. We're sure you have many much more worthy projects. As a matter of fact, it wouldn't be such a bad idea to consider dropping the show.

Best Brains,
We had all the people on our mailing list send similar letters to Casey Silver. We have been doing a series of cult film festivals around the country over the last few years. We have a lot of respect for the films you make fun of for money. Filmmakers such as Ed Wood, Jr., Phil Tucker, Larry Buchanan, and Al Adamson have more talent individually than all of you combined.

To even consider trashing a film like THIS ISLAND EARTH is ridiculous. THIS ISLAND EARTH is a classic 1950s sci-fi film, and to suggest otherwise is ludicrous. We will do all we can to make sure your film project never gets off the ground.

Eric Caiden and the staff of
Hollywood Book and Poster Co
Hollywood, CA

[I read your letters the first time, eagerly anticipating a punch line; when you state that Universal must have more worthy film projects, I was expecting you to suggest THE SHADOW PART II or THE RETURN OF THE REAL MCCOY. Failing that, I went back, looking for some hint of irony. Regrettably I must conclude that you mean your words in earnest. I find this depressingly further proof that the old philosophy of "I may not agree with what you say but I'll fight for your right to say it" has given way to a new attitude: "Shut up unless you're saying something I like."

Please keep in mind that what you're suggesting is really an attempt at censorship. Are you sure you want to be in the same corner as the Christian fundamentalists who opposed THE LAST TEMPTATION OF CHRIST or the gay radicals who boycotted BASIC INSTINCT? At least these groups were acting out of firmly held beliefs; you're acting out of a personal preference. Furthermore, this attempt is misguided and ultimately self-defeating for all of us who enjoy the genre. If you think you can put a stop to something you dislike, it's only a matter of time before some other group, probably with more members than both our mailing lists combined, decides that horror films are contributing to the downfall of Western Civilization, and tries to suppress them.

We are living in an era of far too much negative action: everyone is trying to destroy things they dislike instead of creating things they do like. If you believe certain films are being unfairly maligned (and I concur with your assessment of THIS ISLAND EARTH) then make an effort to gain them the respect they deserve, but don't get upset if your sacred cow continues to be someone else's comic scapegoat.

Remember, no one's making you watch MST-3K, so why would you want to prevent other people from enjoying it? I personally don't like the filmmakers you mention, but you don't see me starting letter writing campaigns to stop your cult film festivals, and if someone else tried, you can rest assured I would oppose their actions as much as I oppose yours in this case.]

CORRECTION BOX
Dan Scapperotti mixed up the names of two voices in THE LION KING: "Ernie Lane and Nathan Sabella" should be Nathan Lane and Ernie Sabella. Since Mr. Scapperotti operates in New York City, he should have been aware of these performers, both extremely popular in Broadway circles for some time. Regarding your recent article on the making of ED WOOD (*IM* 1:4), Vampira (aka Maila Nurmi) was not TV's first horror host, as Mark Carducci states. That honor belongs to John Zacherle ("Zacherley"), who originated his cryptkeeper persona on Philadelphia's SHOCK THEATER in the mid-50s, eventually moving on to CHILLER THEATRE in the 60s. Otherwise, I found the article quite interesting, and look forward to seeing the movie.

Richard Buonananno
New York, NY

As much as I enjoyed your article on Donald G. Jackson, fringe director, he made a few statements that need amending: HELL COMES TO FROGTOWN was presented to New World as a direct-to-video project with a budget of $400,000, but the completion bond companies could not see how it could be made for under a million. Steve White, the new head of film production, thought FROGTOWN was very funny and wanted to greenlight it. Development hell set in. Sandahl Bergman was attached to the project. The first budget came in at $2-million. Randall Frakes did a rewrite to bring the script in line with the million dollar figure. The budget finally settled at $1,510,000. FROGTOWN did not go over budget. The final cost was $1,500,480. The film did go over schedule...by one day.

Jackson was not replaced as cinematographer because of an argument with the art director. Unbeknownst to him, a meeting occurred on Sunday, June 7, 1987 to evaluate the first week's work, attended by Nel Nordlinger, Tony Randel, Gail Katz, and myself. After 21/2 hours, I conceded to their position that Don should be replaced. The main reason was that his camera operating lacked polish. The replacement could not start until Tuesday, so we agreed that Don would continue through the Monday's shoot. As fate would have it, Jackson did have a loud argument with the art director that Monday. At the end of the day, Neal informed Don that his services were no longer required. The proximity of the two events caused his claim that the altercation led to his demotion.

I caution your readers to remember that when a filmmaker speaks (including me) they are getting only one side of the story.

R.J. Kizer
FROGTOWN Co-director
Hollywood, CA

LONG LIVE THE QUEEN OF EVIL
In 1967, I begged my father to take me to see ONE MILLION YEARS BC. He fell asleep, and I fell mesmerized by Martine Beswick. A reviewer of the film said, "Nothing could look more alive or lasting than Raquel Welch." Well, the same can be said about Martine. Never hearing her character's name mentioned in the movie, I did not know who this beautiful dark-haired actress was for ten long years.

After cross referencing the cast's names to several books I found a picture of her from THE PENTHOUSE with her name under it. I played catch up to see everything she had done prior to that period. I have also tried to see everything she has done since. The combination of beauty, talent, and that certain undefinable something provide Martine with a strong film presence that few can match.

Though I will probably never meet her, hopefully through this letter she will know that 27 years ago she left a hell of an impression on a ten-year-old that has not diminished through the years. I would also like to thank your magazine for recognizing Martine, and hopefully we will see more of her in the near future.

Les Douthit
Houston, TX

STILL MORE *RETURN* RAVING
I would like to respond to the crazed dude from New York who maliciously taunted poor Dean Turner from Midlothian, TX [for liking RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD 3]. He can either go home and forget this crap or do what he intends and appear on AMERICA'S MOST WANTED. Dude, mellow down, leave the poor Texan alone, and get a vacation!

Anthony De Leon
Los Angeles, CA

PS.: What is the Talamasca?

[The Talamasca is a fictitious secret organization that documents psychic phenomena in Anne Rice's novels since Queen of the Damned. *Quoting from* The Vampire Companion, *by Katherine Ramsland, "They require of their members confidentiality, honesty, loyalty, and obedience... Their method of acquiring knowledge is one of respectful, nonintrusive observation."]*

IMAGI SALES

BESTSELLING MOVIE COLLECTIBLES

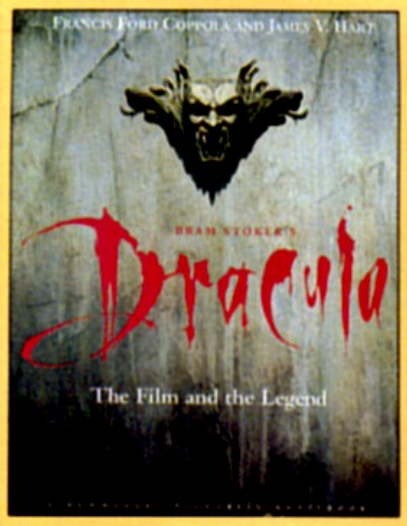
Cartoon Movie Posters
First in the Illustrated History of Movies Through Posters series, this book by Bruce Hershenson, originally published as an auction catalog, contains hundreds of full-color photos of the posters that were auctioned at the famed Christe's auction house in New York City between 1990 and 1993; paper. **$20.00**

ShockXpress: The Essential Guide to Exploitation Cinema
Edited by Stefan Jaworzyn , this fully indexed compilation of six years of the best of Britain's Shock Xpress magazine includes articles by leading genre authors and auteurs. In-depth interviews with Cronenberg, Clive Barker, Larry Buchanan and others. Fully Illustrated; paper, 188 pp. **$19.95**

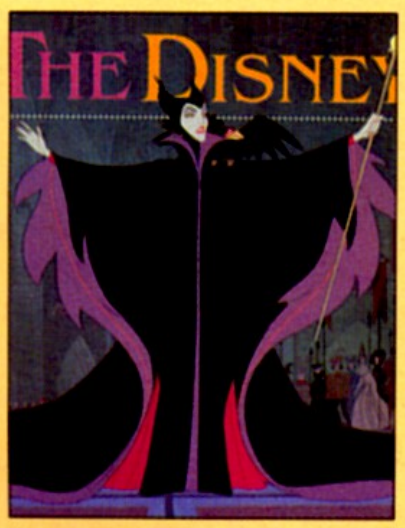
Tim Burton's Nightmare Before Christmas
This book by Frank Thompson and Citadel examines the development of this original project in depth. From its origin as a poem that Tim Burton wrote and illustrated more than 10 years ago through its revival by Burton and Disney into the complex and fascinating endeavor it became. **$15.95**

Classics of the Horror Film
From the days of silent film to THE EXORCIST, William K. Everson and Citadel review the films that contributed to the evolution of the early horror genre. Categories of films include, FRANKENSTEIN and successors, Ghost classics, Vampires, Cat People, Werewolves, Edgar Allan Poe, Madness and others. **$15.95**

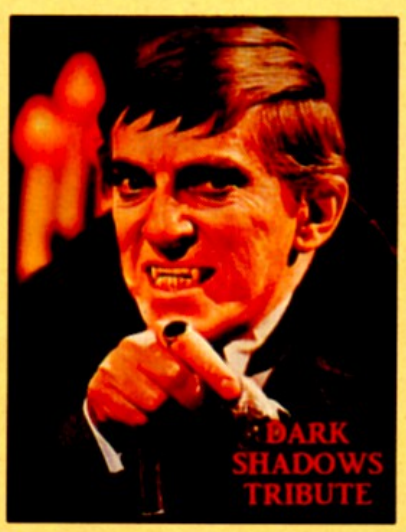
Free Issue!
Subscribe to the review of horror, fantasy and science fiction films, now in its 25th year, and get our issue on STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION free (offer for new subscribers only), now on newsstands. Or take our next issue on STAR TREK VII: GENERATIONS (available December 15th) as your free subscription issue.



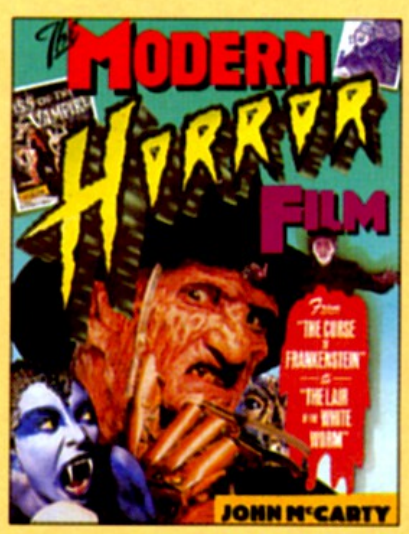
Bram Stoker's Dracula: The Legend and the Film
This book by Francis Ford Coppola, James V. Hart and Newmarket Press contains the complete shooting script, excerpts from the original novel and more than 160 photos. Sidebars explore behind-the-scenes details, the director's innovations and the film's literary and historical roots. **$14.95**



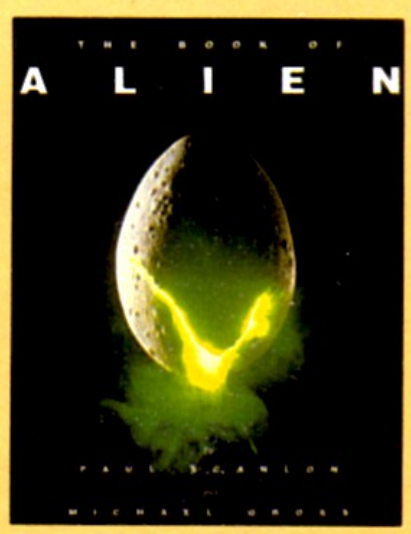
The Disney Villain
Disney villains in particular are some of the most exciting and memorable characters in popular culture. Written by Ollie Johnston and Frank Thomas, two of Disney's "Nine Old Men," this book, published by Hyperion, is a retrospective gallery of 55 colorful rapscallions that audiences through the years have loved to hate. **$45.00**



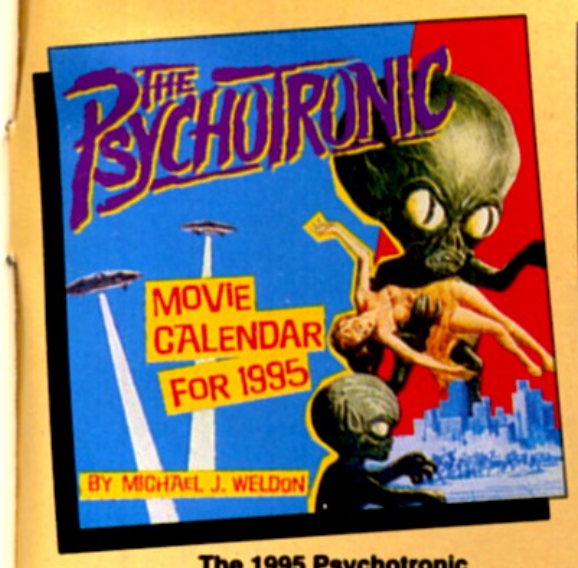
The Dark Shadows Tribute Book
This was the first supernatural soap opera, running daily on ABC from 1966 to 1971. When producer Dan Curtis added Jonathan Frid as vampire Barnabas Collins to the mix, history was made. Features exciting interviews with the cast and crew plus an episode guide to all 600 episodes—by Ed. Gross, James van Hise and Pioneer. **$14.95**



The Modern Horror Film
While most horror film compendia laud the praises of the "classic" horror film produced before 1950, John McCarty has selected 50 films which he feels deserve to be considered "modern" classics. Taken from the '50s through the '80s, these films have made special contributions to the modern horror genre. **$16.95**



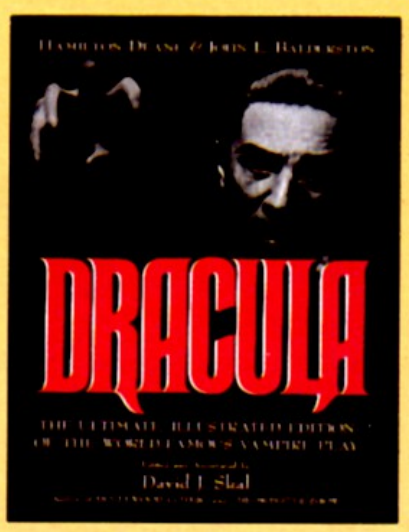
The Book of Alien
The exciting behind-the-scenes story of the making of one of the most popular and influential science fiction films of all time. Packed with sketches, working photographs and interviews with key personnel such as H.R.Giger and Ridley Scott, this book by Paul Scanlon and Michael Gross provides fascinating insights. **$20.00**



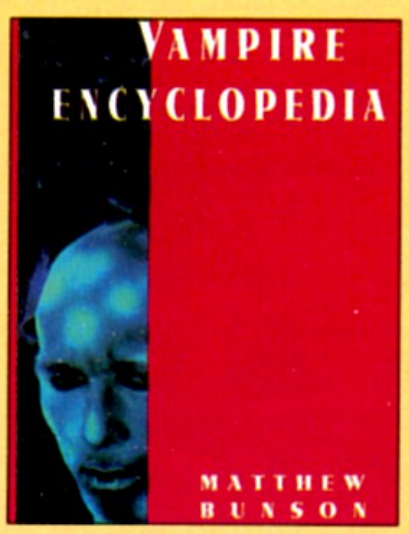
The 1995 Psychotronic Movie Calendar for 1995
Now you can discover who was born (or died) when and stare at 12 different large, disorienting, rare b&w movie ads from newspapers of the past. These depict hits from A.I.P., Hammer, and others along with numerous smaller illustrations covering horror, sci-fi, and exploitation in general. **$10.99**

The Psychotronic Encyclopedia of Film
Written by M. Weldon, this book is an absolute must for those who lust after the slime and sleaze of B-movies. Loose, lecherous and totally offbeat, this one reviews many memorable classics as well as forgotten non-classics. Simply packed with information. Illustrated in black & white; 802 pp. **$17.95**

Bloodsuckers: Vampires at the Movies
Scott Nance and Pioneer trace the history of the vampire film from George Melies' LA MANOIR DIABLE (1897) to the present. Discussed are the origins and the development of the vampire, the tragic tale of Bela Lugosi, the legend of Christopher Lee and the future of vampire films. **$14.95**



Dracula
Fog...Fangs...French Windows...Here, for the first time, is the fully illustrated text of Deane and Balderston's 1927 Broadway hit, as well as Deane's delightfully different original script, unseen for 60 years. Edited and annotated by David J. Skal, the acclaimed author of Hollywood Gothic, this book is for all who treasure theater. **$14.95**



The Vampire Encyclopedia
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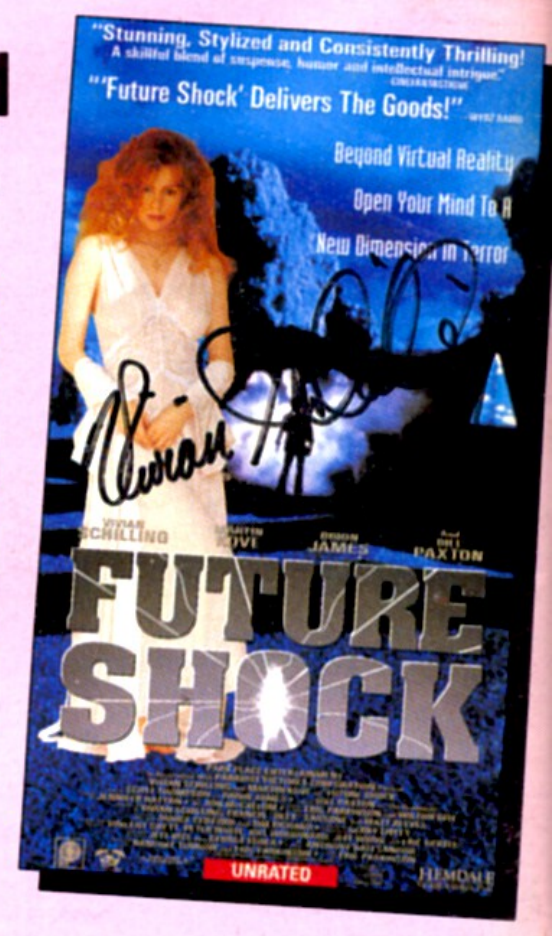

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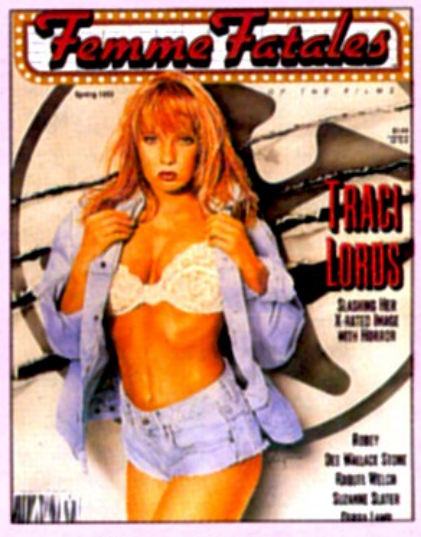

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